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A MONOGRAPH

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

THE PURITAN PREACHER

IN

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY

GEORGE C. LORIMER

Minister at the Temple, Boston

"And they shall be as when a standard-bearer fainteth."

—ISAIAH.

"At what a height thy soaring spirit burns
Star-like, and floods our souls with quickening fires;
Too soon, great heart, thy generous race is run."

—ERNEST MYERS.

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THIS volume presumes to have a distinctive character. The purpose of the author is not so much to relate the mere story of a life, as to unfold its significance. While a great career is sketched with sufficient accuracy to inform the reader on all material points, the effort is also made to determine its relation to the nineteenth century. What is the place of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in the historic period now drawing to a close? How came he to be as conspicuous as he was among contemporaries? And what is his total import to the age, and to all who are sincerely anxious to glorify Christ and serve their own generation? Such are some of the questions included in this volume, and which have influenced the writer to term it—"A Monograph".

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"THE MASTER HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM US
BUT THE WORK MUST GO ON."
CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON.

I.

ENGLAND has been called lately to mourn the death of a prince, a priest and a preacher. The grandson of the Queen was still a young man; the Cardinal was well advanced in years; the minister was one who had scarcely passed the prime of vigorous manhood. He, who was born to a crown, will live in the memory of posterity only as an amiable and an attractive youth whose ambitions crumbled to dust before the breath of the destroyer, Death; and he, who for so many years represented with stately dignity the Roman hierarchy, will be more revered in ages yet to come

for his humanitarian interest in the welfare of the London poor than for all his deserved honors and exalted sacerdotal rank; but he, whose soul went up from the rocky slopes of the Mediterranean, whose murmuring waters whispered a subdued farewell, will be cherished by posterity as one who achieved for himself a throne beyond that of earthly dignities, and won for himself a sceptre that has brought more hope to human minds, and joy and peace to human hearts, than any that has been grasped during these later centuries either by kings or cardinals.

These three — we have tears for the young prince, veneration for the aged priest, and tears, veneration and the profoundest affection for the dead preacher. These three — may I not, without impropriety apply a declaration from the writings of St. Paul, to these bereavements? "These three; faith, hope and charity:" and may I not identify the name of the Duke of Avondale with hope, that of Card-

inal Manning with faith, and that of Charles Haddon Spurgeon with charity in the sense meant by the apostle — LOVE? "These three" — and say, as he did, "the greatest of these is charity."

Great preachers are rarer than great poets, painters or philosophers; for to transcend in their vocation, they must not only be endowed as exceptionally as these exceptional men, but must, in addition, be possessed of qualities not absolutely indispensable to excellency in them. Not only must they be gifted with imagination, with a clear sense of the beautiful, with an ear for the rhythmic harmony of speech, with the art of word-painting, and with a comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of human nature; but likewise, with a sensitive conscience, moral insight, profound spirituality, and eminent skill in organizing work, and in practical leadership. A Byron and a Goethe could sing sweetly and sometimes sublimely, though they did not always lived purely; and

a Kant and a Fichte could reason cogently and often abstrusely, though they were helpless as children in the conduct of affairs either private or public. Paul was a general as well as a thinker, a Philip of Macedon and a Demosthenes in one, a Plato and a Cicero combined: Savonarola was possessed of a fancy only second in vividness to that of the immortal Dante, while he surpassed the poet in the strength of his convictions and in his ability to take the initiative and to execute: Martin Luther was scholar, orator, musician and author, and was at the same time a most devout spirit and a most active and sagacious worker, a strategist of highest rank, and caring for the humblest detail: and others of equal renown, present the same interblending of the genius that distinguishes the ornaments of letters and art with the vigorous virtues and business-like talents which achieve success in the domains of commerce and warfare.

The names of such marvelous men are not

numerous. Here and there, in one country or communion, in one age or another, we find a few, and only a few; now it is a Chrysostom among the Greeks, a Tertullian among the Latins, a Fenelon among the French Catholics, a Hooker among the English Churchmen, or a Beecher among the American Protestants: comparatively speaking just about as many (and no more frequent in appearance,) as the ancient prophets who from time to time were raised up to be God's voice to apostate peoples.

And among these names as lustrous as the brightest, and yet shining with a radiance all its own, gleams that of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the greatest of modern Puritan preachers, who approached nearer to Bunyan than any other in the quality of his imagination, and to Wesley in the thoroughness of his practical endeavors, and who rivaled Hooker in the mastery of Saxon speech, and Henry Ward Beecher in his poetic temperament and Shakes-

pearean acquaintance with the varying moods of the human microcosm.

Isaiah in the Tenth Chapter of his famous Prophecy, contemplates a very serious catastrophe. He is there describing the Lord's judgment, especially upon Assyria, and declares that the effects of the approaching desolations shall be as bewildering and disheartening as is the consternation wrought in an army when "the standard bearer fainteth". Stories are told by veterans of such scenes, when the hands that carried the colors of a regiment through shot and shell were relaxed and released their precious burden; and how perilous the disappearance of the colors was to the steadiness and aggressiveness of the column. Battalions have been demoralized by the loss of their flag, and thus victory has been changed to defeat. Hence the heroic efforts, the reckless chivalry displayed in such emergencies to grasp and uphold the falling military emblem; and man after man has gallantly given his life

to keep it afloat above the heads of his comrades. Even the humblest private soldier and youngest drummer boy will not hesitate to die for so glorious an object, assured that such a death means immortal renown. Similar to the consternation felt by soldiers in the heart of war when the ensign is stricken down, are the emotions now painfully agitating the Christian world. "The standard bearer fainteth"! Nay, more, the stalwart knight of the holy war has been overpowered by ghastly death, and the hearts of millions pause irresolute and sore dismayed.

In these days of theological strife, of irreligious mockings, of secular boasting and pretension, of mortal debate between right and wrong, when the advancing Persian hordes of atheism, materialism and lawlessness move against the Thermopylæ of our faith, our Leonidas has succumbed, and for the moment the royal banner appears to be trailing in the dust. Not unnatural, therefore, the anxiety and alarm

experienced in many hearts for the stability and success of the cause of Christ. And yet we should not forget that other great leaders have "turned to dust and their swords to rust", and Christianity has survived the loss, though overwhelmingly bewildering when first contemplated. So will it be now.

The invisible Lord yet fights for His embattled hosts, nor will He forsake them in their hour of need. Surely in His presence, though unseen, it is not for believers to yield to inglorious apprehension and court disaster by their fears; rather should they act as soldiers would in like circumstances on the field of strife, lay hold upon the colors torn and rent by many a conflict and fling them once more high above their heads and give them to the breeze without stain or shame. Be of good cheer, sad-hearted ones; "the standard bearer fainteth", but the standard itself shall never disappear as long as there are loving souls, however humble in gifts, to consecrate to its maintenance their

loyalty and faith. Even now thousands of honest arms are outstretched to uphold, multiplied thousands are ready to die for it, and surely it can neither be disgraced nor destroyed. In this sublime devotion to its supremacy over all other religions, creeds and *cults* everyone may share, even to the poorest drummer in God's army of salvation; and that all may be inspired to do what they can for the triumph of right over wrong and of truth over error, I would present the example of him whom we may with profit imitate, but whose stirring voice shall be heard in our councils of war no longer — Charles Haddon Spurgeon — whose untimely death afflicts Christendom with immeasurable sorrow.

"Lift high the banner and endure;
Of worldly peace let worldlings boast.
Amid the storms of life, be sure,
The loftiest spirits suffer most."

II.

I HAVE been personally acquainted with this servant of God for twenty years, and though I have never been long enough with him to be admitted into the Adyta of his life, I still know enough of him and of his work to admire his character and venerate his memory. I have frequently heard him preach and have more than once interchanged views with him regarding men and things. When I first saw him and first gained some idea of his labors in visiting the Orphanage at Stockwell, he was in his early prime. The features often described as heavy were lighted by a sunny, limpid smile that seemed to shed over his face a radiance comparable only to the silvery sheen on the bosom of a glassy lake. His form, though not tall, and somewhat rounded at the shoulders,

was still erect enough to suggest considerable physical vigor, and was remarkably compact; and when he stood up to speak his feet were solidly placed on the ground, and his entire bearing was such as to indicate a man of firmness and determination. At that time his voice was marvellously sweet, resonant and tuneful; at one moment soft as a mother's lullaby, and at another ringing with all the clearness of a clarion calling cavalry troops to arms; and then deep and powerful as the reverberations of thunder. For richness, for carrying qualities and for melodious, persuasive pathos probably it has never been surpassed. In one of his lectures addressed to his students he gives a very adequate conception of this many-piped organ and its management, which in his case was certainly governed according to his own principles. One feature of vocal resources unnoticed by him in his lectures, but worthy of recognition here, is that of eminent sincerity, so thoroughly characteristic of his

own delivery. There was nothing artificial, or whining, and nothing overdone, or misdone in the use of that marvellous instrument by which God has accomplished so much in instructing and inspiring mankind. He seemed to realize the pre-eminent value of honesty in his speech; and those who heard him must have been impressed by his directness and his veraciousness, not merely in word but in sound also.

Some ten months ago I parted from him on leaving London for my home, and I brought with me the impression of a change prophetic of the end; though I admit it has come sooner than I expected. He seemed to have grown prematurely old; his shoulders were more bent than formerly; he leaned heavily on chair or railing when he preached, and walked with painful slowness; and though his mind was apparently as clear as ever, his voice unmistakably betrayed his physical infirmity, and his countenance was careworn, and rarely illumined with its old-time fascinating smile. He

evinced many marks of extreme age, and I thought that his sallies of cheerfulness lacked spontaneity, and seemed to be efforts for the purpose of overcoming depression. Nevertheless, his God-speed for my homeward journey was as tenderly kind as of yore, and I left him, not fully realizing what his weakness betokened, that in a few months he wonld have completed his earthly career, and have joined the goodly company of the prophets and mingled his song with the church triumphant.

The Honorable Mr. Gladstone has termed the subject of this Memorial Monograph — the "Last of the Puritans"; it does not, however, seem to me possible that the venerable statesman could have fully weighed the real significance of his words. There are still in the world thousands, and thousands growing into millions, who profoundly sympathize with the spiritual life, the practical benevolences and the doctrinal views of the great London preacher. It would be indeed a sad thought

at this hour were we called on to bury, not merely the mortal remains of one who has been the leader of a mighty cause, but to inter in oblivion that cause itself, and on its tombstone write the despairing word "Lost". Well may we rejoice that such is not our humiliating task. We cannot believe that the nineteen centuries since Christ have been so blind to His truth, that piety and scholarship have been in unexplorable darkness, bound exclusively to superstitious dogmas, and crushed beneath the burden of thoroughly unintelligible creeds; and that the only hope for mankind lies in the utter abrogation of all that has been held sacred and venerable in the past.

While Puritanism cannot but feel the humanizing spirit of the age and yield something of its austerity to prevailing culture, unquestionably its underlying principles and precepts are just as vigorous with life and pregnant with promise as in any of the periods gone. If its essential glory lies in proclaiming the crucified

Christ, in announcing to man his sublime responsibility as a moral agent, and in training men for this world and the other, then there can be no "last" to it; either "last" to its doctrines, its influences, its victories, nor, thanks be to God, to its representatives and champions. It is better, therefore, in speaking of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, to consider him as the Puritan Standard-Bearer, and not merely as the sole and final exponent and defender of one of the mightiest religious movements that ever changed the face of society, revolutionized government, and benefited mankind.

In thus viewing him our thought naturally turns to his character as a Christian. He came of right good Nonconformist stock, and inherited a predisposition toward religious things and a mental and moral bias toward the ministry, though needing, as others, personal regeneration and acceptance of Christ as his Saviour. His father and his grandfather before him served in the pulpit, and though not attain-

ing to any remarkable positions of influence or power, were men universally esteemed and respected in their day and generation. Let us not despise a Christian ancestry; rather let us be grateful for such a blessing, even though we may ourselves be infidels; for the indescribable restraints implanted in our nature which check tendencies to lawlessness, may doubtless be traced to the conscientious living of the Hezekiahs and Hannahs, the Aquillas and Priscillas of times far different from our own. Our hero was in this sense pre-ordained by heredity to sincerity and uprightness, to faith and faithfulness, and very early began to make his calling and election sure.

Mr. Spurgeon was born in Kelvedon, Essex, June 19, 1834. This quiet rural retreat is not very far, especially in these days of railways, from the great metropolis of London. The scenery of his birthplace wears the charming aspect so frequently manifest in retired English nooks, where the country is as fair as

Paradise. The verdure is rich and soft and silken, the flowers deeply dyed, and in the month of June the air is fragrant and the skies are clear; and the weary hearted, the lonely and oppressed may well court such sylvan solitudes and commune with them forever. The little boy of Kelvedon loved nature and never did his heart wander from his first love. He never could endure a stifling atmosphere; his eyes continually hungered for the sight of green fields; and his homestead in later years was always so situated that his ear could drink in the song of the morning lark and the matin strains of the nightingale, and his heart feel the sweet and refining influence that comes from wood and vale. Fellowship with nature, if it is not identical with fellowship with God, brings a marvellous uplifting of the soul in that direction; and he who is attached to green fields and limpid streams and the solitariness of the savage glen, and can spend with gladness hours amid the unbroken still-

ness of the Alps, cannot but have something in him that is impelling him heavenward.

Truly, as Wordsworth has written:

> "Nature never did betray
> The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
> Thro' all the years of this our life to lead
> From joy to joy; for she can so inform
> The mind that is within us, so impress
> With quietness and beanty, and so feed
> With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
> Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
> Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
> The dreary intercourse of daily life,
> Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
> Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
> Is full of blessings."

Much of what the poet thus delightfully describes, I am sure, was from his earliest days recognized and realized by the man who held continual communion with the Creator, not only in His Word, but in His Works as well.

III.

MR. SPURGEON'S birth occurred at a transition period in English history. William IV. ascended the throne in the year 1830; and about that time the first railroad was opened, running between Liverpool and Manchester. But the material changes betokened by this new means of locomotion were not more radical and significant than those that were beginning to take place in the spheres of politics and religion. Sir Robert Peel, Lord Melbourne, Lord John Russell, and other eminent men were planning important and wide-reaching reforms. O'Connell was still maintaining the cause of Ireland and laying foundations on which recent agita-

tors have successfully built; and a thorough and most searching inquiry was beginning to be instituted into the causes of poverty which has resulted in the most promising of industrial revolutions. The Oxford movement, of so much importance to the Church of England and to religious thought; and the disruption of the Church of Scotland that has wrought so beneficially for evangelical faith, were in the near future; and causes were at work that would render them actualities. In other words, a new era was dawning, an era of commercial greatness, of philanthropic endeavor, and of evangelical reinvigoration; and when the child of whom I write lay in his Puritan mother's arms, the time had arrived for an exceptional spiritual force to be felt in the re-formation of society. He received the imprint of his times; and therefore as a Christian, he was not only pre-eminently biblical in his thought and spirit, but sagacious and practical in his philanthropy.

But before he reached anything like a posi-

tion of usefulness, that momentous change which is termed "conversion", had to occur, and it did occur when he was only fifteen years of age.

It is unnecessary that I attempt to describe his feelings when he realized that he was a sinner; for he has often told the story, how, when he was under conviction, he endured great mental agony, even as Bunyan had done before him. In this troubled condition he was providentially led into a meeting-house of the primitive Methodists at Colchester, where he heard an earnest sermon from the text: "Look unto Me and be ye saved." There and then he accepted Christ as his Saviour and was always glad to be able to designate the hour and the spot of his conversion. Consequently from the beginning of his religious life he expressed himself in the language of confidence and assurance, not, however, because he discovered any merit in himself, but because he fully recognized the abundant ability of Jesus

Christ to save completely by his grace. Perhaps it may not be amiss here once more to print his own account of this transition from darkness to light. He writes:

"I will tell you how I myself was brought to the knowledge of this truth. It may happen the telling of that will bring some one else to Christ. It pleased God in my childhood to convince me of sin. I lived a miserable creature, finding no hope, no comfort, thinking that surely God would never save me. At last the worst came to the worst — I was miserable; I could do scarcely anything. My heart was broken in pieces. Six months did I pray, prayed agonizingly with all my heart, and never had an answer. I resolved that in the town where I lived, I would visit every place of worship in order to find out the way of salvation. I felt I was willing to do anything and be anything if God would only forgive me. I set off, determined to go round to all the chapels, and I went to all the places of worship;

and though I dearly venerate the men that occupy those pulpits now, and did so then, I am bound to say that I never heard them once fully preach the Gospel. I mean by that — they preached truth, great truths, many good truths that were fitting to many of their congregation — spiritually-minded people; but what I wanted to know was — How can I get my sins forgiven? And they never once told me that. I wanted to hear how a poor sinner, under a sense of sin, might find peace with God; and when I went I heard a sermon on 'Be not deceived. God is not mocked,' which cut me up worse, but did not say how I might escape. I went again another day, and the text was something about the glories of the righteous; nothing for poor me. I was something like a dog under the table, not allowed to eat of the children's food. I went time after time, and I can honestly say, I don't know that I ever went without prayer to God, and I am sure there was not a more attentive hearer in

all the place than myself, for I panted and longed to understand how I might be saved.

"At last, one snowy day — it snowed so much I could not go to the place I had determined to go to, and I was obliged to stop on the road, and it was a blessed stop to me — I found rather an obscure street and turned down a court, and there was a little chapel. I wanted to go somewhere, but I did not know this place. It was the Primitive Methodists' chapel. I had heard of these people from many, and how they sang so loudly that they made people's heads ache; but that did not matter. I wanted to know how I might be saved, and if they made my head ache ever so much I did not care. So, sitting down, the service went on, but no minister came. At last a very thin looking man came into the pulpit and opened his Bible and read these words: 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' Just setting his eyes upon me, as if he knew me all by heart, he said, 'Young

man, you are in trouble.' Well, I was, sure enough. Says he, 'You will never get out of it unless you look to Christ.' And then lifting up his hands he cried out, as only I think a Primitive Methodist could do, 'Look, look, look! It is only look,' said he. I saw at once the way of salvation. Oh, how I did leap for joy at that moment. I know not what else he said — I did not take much notice of it — I was so possessed with that one thought. Like as when the brazen serpent was lifted up, they only looked and were healed. I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard this word 'Look', what a charming word it seemed to me. Oh, I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away, and in Heaven I will look on still in my joy unutterable.

"I now think I am bound never to preach a sermon without preaching to sinners. I do think that a minister who can preach a sermon without addressing sinners does not know how to preach."

Happy the man who preserves a clear memory of the time and circumstance of his own conversion, and who, from the outset, can exclaim, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him"; for such a man will ever be peaceful, cheerful, and sweetly patient in tribulation.

"The joy of the Lord" was thoroughly characteristic of our brother's faith. When his health was vigorous he was as mirthful and gladsome a soul as I ever knew; and even afterward when pain had toned down the laughter, the serenity and restfulness would assert themselves in some charming and gleesome sally. In his strong days the sunniness of his nature was rather increased than diminished by his piety, and he often expressed himself in wholesome words of wit and humor; for he never regarded wit and merriment as incompatible with holy living. Some persons have pretended to be vastly scandalized by his quaint

speech and amusing expressions in the pulpit; but I am persuaded that their scruples are the result of morbid sanctimoniousness; for I never heard anything from his lips, nor have I ever heard of his saying anything sufficiently idle or irreverent to challenge serious criticism. At the beginning of his ministry he may have allowed his imagination a fuller range than was best, and may have found it difficult to restrain a tendency toward odd turns of thought and homely illustrations. These moods very likely offended staid church-goers, who had been accustomed to the dullness and vapidity of mediocrity; and afforded excuse for the over-sensitive censors of the press to pour forth their inky indignation. But he is not the only culprit who has sinned in this respect against the canons of severe taste. Robert Hall before him had been condemned for yielding occasionally to a mirthful temper. Henry Ward Beecher, as we all know, found it difficult to be perpetually solemn. But when some

of the rigidly conservative newspapers represented the London Puritan as a mountebank and a buffoon, and declared that his pulpit performances were comparable to a "Punch and Judy" show, they not only exceeded the bounds of decent animadversion, but had, in my opinion, no substantial grounds for their gross and heartless censure. Rarely in his sermons will traces of the humorous be found; and if, occasionally, it is discovered it never seems to be inspired by a disposition to trifle with sacred things. Often in his lectures, I admit, he employed wit and ridicule and does so legitimately, as a keen and polished blade. On these occasions, however, his wit was never coarse, nor was his humor rude or indecorous.

A few examples of this feature of his character may be permitted here. When his mother said to him,

"Ah, Charley, I have often prayed that you might be saved, but never that you should become a Baptist," he replied with all the fer-

vor of a modern prophet, "God has answered your prayer, mother, with His usual bounty, and given you more than you asked."

Once in criticising a very formal divine, he quoted Mrs. Partington as saying, "Nothing don't do me so much good as to go to church Sunday morning, and hear a precious minister dispense with the gospel." And he reports in one of his addresses, and that, too, with much force, what he overheard said of an earnest croquet-playing clergyman, "that he would evidently make a most useful pastor if he were only converted." It is said that a persevering and annoying visitor insisted on being admitted to his presence and would not take "no" for an answer; at last the importunate caller told the domestic to say that "one of the Master's servants was waiting to see him on the Master's business"; whereat Mr. Spurgeon sent back the answer "that he was very sorry, but the fact was he was at that very moment engaged with the

Master himself, and had no time to give to the servant".

He told me why he preferred a large church to a small one; for though the latter had many attractions, he regarded it as not unlike a row-boat which a man is in danger of upsetting if he ventures to move about; whereas the former is like a big ocean steamer, on the decks of which he can parade without the possibility of swamping the whole concern. Now assuredly there can be nothing pernicious in such odd conceits and quaint comparisons; and troubled souls who will take the pains to read "John Ploughman" and similar products of his pen, will perceive that fun was to him so truly a part of his nature that he would have been insincere if he had concealed or suppressed it altogether.

And this leads me to note his pre-eminent truthfulness. He was a supremely veracious soul, and hence the avowed enemy of frauds and shoddy. Anyone will discover this by read-

ing his admirable lecture on "Counterfeits", in which he deals most mercilessly with paste jewelry and all other kinds of deceiving artifices, and especially with those shams that obtrude themselves into pew and pulpit. Roundly he condemned all temple builders, whether in material or spiritual things, who

> "make a front just like St. Paul's,
> Or like Westminster Abbey,
> And then, as if to cheat the Lord
> Leave the back part shabby."

He never had a doubt as to the reality of his own conversion, nor one as to the essential accuracy of his own views of Redemption; and he could not comprehend the indifference with which some clergymen in his time regarded doctrinal points. He was roused to indignation by their laxity, and in burning words denounced an apathy that bordered on insincerity; and in his fervid protestations, perhaps all unconsciously, disclosed the downright hon-

esty of his own nature. Fully twenty years ago he challenged the drift of the age, and was eloquently intolerant of its latitudinarianism, its dissimulation and pious shuffling; and in view of what occurred at a subsequent period, his resolute bearing at that time is worthy of commemoration. Whether we agree or not with all that is expressed in the following excerpt, we doubtless will admire the burning spirit it reveals:

"Strange feats are now performed in the theatre of doctrine. Our forefathers would fail to comprehend us. So broad, so extensive does the charity of the age seem likely to become, that Mahometan and Buddhist may reasonably expect to be welcomed as true believers by the followers of Christ. If men who cavil at inspiration shall be recognised as Christian ministers, we shall soon see atheists accepted as preachers of Christ, and deists received with open hands as evangelical divines. You may say, 'Never!' but to

the unsophisticated mind of an *ungermanized* believer, accustomed to call spades spades, and to speak of things in Saxon terms, it seems a natural and inevitable goal. If certain things be truths, and their opposite errors, I know where I am; but when I am bewildered with objectives and subjectives, standpoints, and points of view, I confess I am in a maze; and I think those babes, to whom Christ declares that heavenly things are revealed, must be in a maze too. We see at this hour things which were, and are, plain, naked heresy, labelled as '*Orthodoxy looked at from another point of view.*' We are told that, if a man contradicts us point-blank, nevertheless our statements are precisely the same, only that, from our peculiar idiosyncrasy, we have different ways of expressing ourselves. Now the counterfeit is the man for such an age as this — at least so the demon tells him. 'You will give,' saith he, 'no obnoxious rub to your neighbor. You will never speak bitterly for the truth, because

you do not love it well enough. You will never grow angry with an opponent, because you have nothing to be angry about. You will wear no uncomely points and jagged edges, which can come into unceremonious collision with your fellows. Your words can be smoother than butter, and you may dip your foot in oil.'

"To turn your sail a little, according to company, is very easy, and you can tack about as the wind changes. Religion is to the counterfeit but a matter of broad and narrow gauge; so long as he can keep the train going, and speed toward the terminus, it does not matter. In the old covenanting age, when men signed the articles of their faith with blood, counterfeits were in the way, and were disdainfully kicked out of the chair of honor. In those times, when men jostled with side and shoulder for the right — when men said, 'No, in God's name, we must earnestly contend for the faith, and not for an hour will we give place to the

enemies of the Lord. God has committed the truth to our keeping, and we will keep it or spill our hearts' blood. With burning hands we will grasp it at the stake; on the rack and in the dungeon we will hold it fast; and in the agonies of death we will preserve the treasure in our bleeding hearts, hoping to bear it with us to the skies!' then, we say, counterfeits were in the way; but now it is an easy age; and my Lord Turnabout, and Mr. Anything, and that other gentleman whose great grandfather was a waterman, looking one way and rowing another, will be much in demand.

"Pliable, malleable men — men who go to be moulded, fashioned and shaped! Do you know Mrs. Feigning's opinion of them? Such nice men in all company! Such delightful persons in the drawing-room — never raise a controversy! The very men for editors of twist-about periodicals; just the chosen conductors of those daily newspapers whose want of principle is their principal means of sale;

just the persons, in fact, who are up to the times, and scorn the fetters of consistency or truth."

The author of these virile sentiments brought on himself the indignation of the Anglican Church when he denounced baptismal regeneration, years ago, just as he incurred more recently manifold reproaches on account of his hardy hostility to the new theology. It is not the question here as to whether he was altogether right in the latter contention; but as indicative of his absolute integrity it is worthy of respect and admiration. At least it gave evidence that he believed something; and this is of value in an age when respect has been lost for various pulpits whose brilliant occupants seem hardly to know why they are there, what they are there for, and what ideas they are expected to represent and champion. With society at large it is not the quality of a man's belief that renders him potent and

attractive, it is pre-eminently its reality. Why should people go to church to listen to a series of negations, however beautifully clothed, and to have their poor wavering faith shocked and overthrown by those to whom they have been taught to look as spiritual guides and instructors? Where, in other words, is the difference between the intellectual dynamite of a Thomas Paine and a Robert Ingersoll and the quiet and almost imperceptible sapping and mining of foundations by teachers who are consecrated the exponents and defenders of a faith which they do not really believe? Thousands of weary and troubled souls turn from church doors saying —

"We looked for bread and we have received stones; fish, and we have been bitten by gleaming serpents; and the little of divine life in us has been starved by meagre negatives and poisoned by the venom of clerical scepticism."

There was never any uncertain sound in the utterances of the London Puritan. He, at

least, knew what he believed and why he believed it; he realized that God "desires truth in the inward parts", and expected that as he sought it God would "make him to know wisdom". To him may be applied, without material modification, what Thomas Carlyle wrote concerning the Scotch pulpit hero of the Sixteenth Century:

"Reality is of God's making; it is alone strong. How many *pented bredds*, pretending to be real, are fitter to swim than to be worshipped! This Knox cannot live but by fact: he clings to reality as the shipwrecked sailor to the cliff. He is an instance to us how a man, by sincerity itself, becomes heroic: it is the grand gift he has. We find in Knox a good honest intellectual talent, no transcendent one; a narrow, inconsiderable man, as compared with Luther: but in heartfelt instinctive adherence to truth, in *sincerity*, as we say, he has no superior; nay, one might ask, What equal he has? The heart of him is of the true Prophet

cast. 'He lies there,' said the Earl of Morton at his grave, 'who never feared the face of man.' He resembles, more than any of the moderns, an Old-Hebrew Prophet. The same inflexibility, intolerance, rigid narrow-looking adherence to God's truth, stern rebuke in the name of God to all that forsake truth: an Old-Hebrew Prophet in the guise of an Edinburgh Minister of the Sixteenth Century. We are to take him for that; not require him to be other."

IV.

IT has been said that Mr. Spurgeon's spiritual insight was not as clear as that of a literary preacher whose name I forbear to mention. The justice of the criticism, of course, can only be determined by the significance the writer attaches to the word "spiritual". The minister to whom he refers as an illustrious instance of what he means, is reputed to be more frequently an attendant on the opera and theatre than on the sick, and knows more of *salons* and banquets than he does of prayer-meetings or of the abodes of indigence and suffering; and while his poetic genius is undeniable, I do not think that even he himself would claim to possess in any remarkable degree the high quality ascribed to him by his too partial admirer.

The Puritan may not have been a good judge of a statue or of the art form of a poem, and perhaps may have failed in doing justice to a picture; but I question whether any man of his age has ever known more of the human soul, of its longings, its weaknesses, its infirmities and its needs, or who has seen more clearly its relation to the infinite God. I am consequently compelled to resent the criticism, which, most likely, as it appeared in a daily paper, was penned by one whose ideas of what "spiritual discernment" signifies are about as vague as a preacher's comprehension of reportorial omniscience.

The phrase, it must be confessed, is often a vague one. Not infrequently it is applied to persons who perpetually are mouthing pious platitudes, whose voice is hardly distinguishable from a whine, and whose speech is burdened with the idlest and cheapest cant. Others interpret it as denoting a precious grace incompatable with cushioned pews, organs and

other worldly abominations, such as carpets, free ventilation, flowers and music. To such souls, it is almost synonymous with uncouthness, cheerlessness and discomfort. Again, the meaning of the expression has been narrowed and perverted by a class of religionists whose vacillating vagaries have occasioned no small disturbance in our times. Seventh-Day Sabbatarians, Faith Healers, Second Advent Annihilationists, Christian Scientists, Christadelphians and other most conscientious and excellent people, have seemed by the tone of their assumptions to restrict spiritual enduement to themselves. Far be it from me to say that any of these friends are destitute of its possession. I do not pretend to judge them, and I make no question as to the genuineness of their devoutness. But I do insist that spirituality is not identified with any of the forms of belief or modes of worship, or even manner of talking and singing, on which they appear to place so supreme an emphasis; but rather,

and essentially with that conscious receptivity of the Divine on the part of the human which has been rendered possible by the Mediation of Christ, and with that constant intercourse and communion between man and God, which are full of loving confidences and of mysterious disclosures, and that almost involve an entire interblending of the earthly nature with the Heavenly. An Apostle unfolds its sublime character when he writes: "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." And perhaps in contemporaneous literature we have no truer or profounder conception of this gracious condition of soul, of its discernment, insight, meekness and nobility of ideal, than that fur-

nished by Robert Browning in his poem on "Saul".

The following lines are worthy of thought:

"I spoke as I saw.
I report, as a man may of God's work — all's love, yet all's law!
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dew-drop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank to the Infinite care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I do but open my eyes — and perfection, no more and no less
In the kind I imagined, full fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of Man's nothing-perfect to God's All-Complete
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet!

* * * * * *

He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand
the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh that I
seek.
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A face like my face that receives thee: a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever! a Hand like this
hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee!
See the Christ stand!"

Rest assured, that real spirituality is not far different from this. Details may vary, but in essence it is necessarily this, and not the meagre and almost material thing which some people figure to themselves. And those who knew Mr. Spurgeon most intimately will, I am persuaded, admit that this obeisance of soul to the Supreme, this humble recognition of the inadequacy of mere human knowledge, this clear discernment of love and law in the universe and of the Creator in all His works, this confession of his own "nothing-perfect" and of the "All-Complete of God", and this faith

in an Incarnation, that brings a hand like our own to deliver the perishing, were unmistakably characteristic of his religious life. He trusted unwaveringly in Jesus, "that mighty helper of the hurts of man"; he had no heart for the clamor and confusion of mere polemical strife, and never used a "doctrine as a chopping block upon which to try the edge of his faculty"; and he was given continually to prayerful intercourse with the Heavenly Father and to the daily exercise of a joyous faith. Prayer and praise were to him antiphonal; he always expected the response. He lived in a spiritual universe, and all forms failed to hide from his eyes the majesty of his Lord; and the varying physical conditions of the struggling race could not obscure a something in each soul that allied it to the Invisible.

What are generally accepted as realities, were less real to him than the things which the mass of mankind regard as vague and shad-

owy. To him the spiritual was not the phenomenal but the true and the abiding. Hence, he walked with God as with an actual presence, he talked with God as with a veritable personality, and he trusted Him, not with that trust that leaves the Almighty, because He is Almighty to do everything, as though impotence and idleness could be in any sense to His glory, but with the faith that works, endures, suffers, leaving the results to Him who in every instance must give the increase.

One thing is unquestionably true, the subject of this Monograph, at least was sufficiently spiritual-minded for no one to suspect him of covetousness. While he was paid much money for various services, he cannot be charged with a mercenary spirit, for he has given as freely as he received, and even more so. When attending the Tabernacle services in London last March, I understood one of the gentlemen there to say that the pastor had of late devoted his salary entirely to the interests of his

church — probably his income from his publications sufficing for all of his modest wants. It is well known that the money given to him on the completion of his fiftieth year, and a large sum presented to him on another important occasion, he promptly devoted to the interests of the Orphanage and to the Pastor's College. And now that he has gone I predict, when his affairs are examined, it will be found that he has not incurred the awful responsibility of dying worth a fortune. He never squandered anything but himself.

A dead millionaire layman must be an indescribably pathetic object to witnessing angels; but a dead preacher, who has accumulated useless thousands, must be a sight to inspire angelic beings with lofty scorn and horror; for how could he ever amass so much and be faithful to his vow as a genuine brother of humanity? If anyone ought to administer on his estate while living it is a minister of the Gospel, and it is gratifying to know that the

large majority of them do so, because — perhaps — they cannot do otherwise.

As the hand of our friend was ever open, so his sympathies were ever broad and deep. It was indeed a beautiful sight to see him in company with the children at the Orphanage, and to observe his countenance lighten as he listened to their simple and affectionate stories; or to note the shadows of pain come over his face as he heard the wail of the dying pauper child. His patience with intruders and his readiness to converse with the lowly, gave abundant evidence of his oneness in feeling with that Elder Brother who bore our griefs and carried our infirmities. But we must not suppose that he was never tempted by the indiscretion and imprudence of visitors to language very forceful and expressive. He told me of a guest whom he had left in his study, and on his return found him perusing his private correspondence; and it is one of the most humiliating chapters in the life of such a

man as he, to recount the mortifying instances of men who crept into his confidence only to betray, and who partook of his bread only to misrepresent his personal habits and his private life. We are grateful, while experiences of this kind called forth emphatic indignation, that they did not embitter him toward the unoffending nor narrow the exercise of kindly hospitality. His welcome was always warm and generous; and especially Americans have reason to remember his courteous receptions. They were never treated coldly or superciliously; and multitudes who had really no claim to warrant their intrusion on his time, were made to realize that he was glad to see them if they were glad to see him. He was easy of approach, genial in manner, and agreeably affable in conversation, without ever a touch of the condescending. Always considerate of the feelings of others, and amiably tolerant of their curiosity, he carried himself as a quiet, unpretentious gentleman. He was specially

careful never to mar the pleasure a stranger might derive from meeting with him, by imparting the story of his excruciating physical sufferings. The valetudinarian weakness was not his. Though at times his bodily pains were next to unendurable, and continued to torture him in the pulpit, he would rarely, if ever, seem to appeal for sympathy to a visitor who had called after the service to thank him. He made no parade of his afflictions. What he had to bear, he bore uncomplainingly, and as far as possible, silently, and in the retirement of his home. There his loved ones often witnessed his agony and his heroic endeavors to suppress all signs of the fiery furnace through which he was passing. He never murmured, nor foolishly declaimed against God's providential dealings; for full well he knew that the Father was not unmindful of His covenant, and would not permit him to be racked and tried beyond the power of grace to sustain. Moreover, he humbly believed "that all things

would work together for his good"; and he constantly anticipated the end, and saw

"The pain-throb triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose by the struggle in this."

V.

CONFESSEDLY incomplete as this outline of character is, I must turn from it that I may sketch as clearly, if not as fully as possible, the power of Mr. Spurgeon as a preacher. He has naturally enough been compared with other eminent pulpit orators, and not unfrequently to his disadvantage. It has been said that none of his sermons are master-pieces of eloquence, like some of Bossuet's, Saurin's or Lacordaire's; and that they even fail as models, being excelled by those of Frederick Robertson and Alexander Maclaren. All this may be so; but unless I misjudge humanity, his discourses will long continue after his life to be an unfailing source of comfort to simple and troubled souls. Estimated by their attractiveness and

their immediate spiritual force, they undoubtedly surpass all contemporaneous preaching.

The man who could gather and hold on each Sunday for many years two audiences of five to six thousand each, and who, when announced to speak in halls, as at the Crystal Palace, capable of holding twenty thousand, filled them to repletion; and who has found readers for his printed sermons all over the world, is hardly to be compared with any, even the most eminent of his brethren. He stands by himself, and taken altogether is probably without parallel in ancient or modern times.

Much has been written during the past quarter of a century as to the secret of his power, and no very satisfactory conclusion has been reached; for who can explain the charm of any great leader's personality? Who can tell why Beecher and Brooks, Père Hyacinthe, Punshon and Liddon should fascinate multitudes, when they have so little in common and differ from each other so materially? Evidently

there is in each one a distinctive quality, an indescribable something which pertains to his individuality, and which is no more to be defined by our poor speech than the mysterious essence of the Godhead. Novalis calls man the "shekinah", or the symbol of the Highest, and we must allow that something of the impenetrableness of the Supreme has been inherited by spiritual genius. But though we can give no adequate account of the real source of Mr. Spurgeon's power, or, so far as that goes, of any exceptional teacher's peculiar charm, we can specify some elements that seem to have been inseparable from its exercise.

Most prominent among these was his manner of prayer. When I first heard him, and it has been so ever since, his petitions impressed me more than his sermons. There was about them a simplicity, directness, dignity, a subdued fervor and childlike confidence; and such an absence of bombast and stereotyped phrase that I was irresistibly drawn, as the people

manifestly were, to a throne of grace. He seemed to be talking with God, reverently and humbly as became a creature, and yet boldly and trustfully as became a saint. No complimentary rhetoric was employed as though to assure the Infinite of his continued good opinion; no theologizing, like the recital of a creed, to satisfy Heaven and earth — especially earth — with his doctrinal soundness; no stamping, no gesture, as though the Divine attention could be caught by the tricks of the Forum; but instead, an earnestness too real for stilted speech, a solemnity too deep for presumption, and an appreciation of the privilege of the souls' commerce with the Unseen, too high for it to be used in any other way than in tenderly voicing common human needs in the ear of the listening Father. It appeared to me that he preached well, because he had prayed well; and that he compelled the people to listen to his sermons because they had, of necessity, joined in his supplications.

I remember hearing once — I never wanted to hear him again — a very pompous clergyman who seemed to take great pleasure in introducing into his supplications a large number of unfamiliar words, who also sought by means of antitheses, alliterations, grandiloquent phrases, and other tricks and artificialities of the rhodomontade rhetorician to win "the ears of the groundlings". As I listened for a while I felt that these verbal pyrotechnics were not designed for heaven, but for earth, not for the Creator, but for the creature. This impression was deepened when I afterward read some specimens of this gentleman's declamatory piety in print. It seemed evident that it had met its proper destiny, reported for a newspaper, to be admired and praised by those who regard devotion only as a literary effort. We have all heard of that famous Boston prayer which was said to be the finest ever addressed to a Boston audience. But even that memorable performance "paled its ineffec-

tual fires" in the presence of the verbal coruscations and bombastic terminology which was deemed suitable for the ear of him who is the Author of speech. I grew sick at heart when, as I listened to the close, and felt that "sacred silence" would have been more helpful to all serious souls than this glittering chatter, and this many and mighty-syllabled twaddle, which displayed more affectation than dependence, and more vanity than heartiness.

It seems to me that ministers cannot be too careful as to their manner in public prayer. In that solemn service they are seeking to voice the cares, the woes, the trials and the sins of the people, and at the same time they are seeking an audience of the compassionate Father, who neither desires a eulogy from their lips, nor a parade of showy words.

Surely their language, under such solemn circumstances, ought to be simple and easily understood on the part of those who are supposed to adopt it as it flows from the lips of

the suppliant; and certainly it should gleam throughout with honesty and sincerity, presented as it is to a Being who sees through shams and abominates them. Long and complicated sentences are out of place, turgid and swelling expressions are equally intrusive, and scraps of poetry are as incongruous as they would be in the mouth of a drowning man when calling on his friends to save him from a watery grave. Some ministers are discursive in their prayers, others are informing; some exhort, others are dictatorial, and others modestly suggest what is becoming in the Almighty, while others manifest a free and easy familiarity, which is absolutely incompatible with reverence. These things ought not so to be.

The pastor should always try to realize that praying is not preaching. The style, the action, and the voice appropriate to a spoken discourse, are not in keeping with the more solemn privilege of supplication. It may be

legitimate in the former to startle the hearer by well-executed climaxes, by bold figures, by gorgeousness of word-painting; and it may be pardonable, when trying to move him, to employ all the arts of the trained and conscientious orator. I have no criticism to offer on these points. The gifts of eloquence and of dramatic expression are among the highest conferred on man; they are to be valued, and they are to be earnestly employed; but they were never designed by their Author as means of approach to a throne of grace. He is not to be startled, or roused from lethargy, and were he to be so swayed and influenced it certainly never would be accomplished by declamation.

In prayer there should be absolute immobility. The position once taken, whether standing or kneeling, should be retained to the end. There should be no shuffling of the feet, no movements of the hands, no restless twitching of the fingers, no shaking of the head, and, in a word, no action whatever. The body

should be as a thing forsaken. It should not be thrust before the worshiper, distracting his attention from the petitions being offered, and disturbing the communion between him and his God. Not the slightest gesticulation should recall its existence. For the time being it should be extinct. The voice, also, should be subdued and low; firm and distinct, but never harsh or loud. Elocution, generally a snare, and in prayer almost a sacrilege, ought to be avoided. The attention given to varied modulation, to excessive emphasis, to musical intonations, renders difficult the due concentration of mind on the Supreme Being, whose presence and blessing are being sought. A merry song at a funeral is not more out of place than are elocutionary gymnastics in prayer. Sometimes clergymen who are anxious to discharge with decent propriety all the functions of their sacred office go to professed teachers of the art of reading and speaking for instruction. These guides who make

orators, or claim to do so, but have never been able to make themselves orators, undertake to show ministerial students how to pray, when, in many instances, they themselves are profoundly ignorant of its first principles. The public petitions which are fashioned and delivered by the rules laid down by such men, are generally stilted in style, and distinguished more by sound than by sound sense, and as a whole are offensive to modesty and spirituality. Thrust away all cheap artificialities. The voice needs only the pathos that springs from real sympathy with the sins and sorrows of the world, and only the music that is born of spirituality, and the emphasis that comes from sincerity and earnestness; qualities these which no elocutionist can impart. In all of these respects, however, Charles H. Spurgeon was a model; for not one of the blemishes referred to in these reflections and strictures could be detected when he approached God with pleadings on behalf of the people.

VI.

UNQUESTIONABLY, the style of the "Emperor of the Pulpit", as he has recently been called, and his manner of delivery are to be taken into consideration in studying the secret of his successful ministrations; and yet even these can hardly be called "the secret"; for the peculiarities that distinguished his public utterances were apparent to every thoughtful mind. In each sermon he always seemed to have a clear and specific topic to discuss, and even in Scripture exposition there was ever manifest a unity that enabled the listener to follow him with profit and delight. Though he adhered to the old-fashioned method of dividing his theme into heads and sometimes

into subheads, there was little of mechanical stiffness beyond this feature to mar the evident spontaneity and richness of his thought and speech. Anyone of ordinary intelligence could follow him and could appreciate even his profoundest reflections, and cultured persons were usually as highly edified as the illiterate.

It is a mistake to suppose that obscurity is always a sign of profundity, as very often it merely denotes the most remarkable shallowness that has come to be dense by stirring up the sedimenta of various theories and philosophies, which have been deposited in the receptive mind. With Mr. Spurgeon there was always a transparency, a crystalline beauty of expression, so that it was impossible for mediocre hearers to miss his meaning, and at the same time impossible for educated people not to be stimulated and benefited. Of course this was due largely to the richness and fecundity of his intellect, as well as to his Saxon habit of speech, to which must be added

an all-pervasive biblical spirit which animated and invigorated his style.

I know not how the impression has obtained that the fallen Standard-Bearer was a man of totally inadequate scholarship and of superficial equipment. The fact is, he was by nature a student, it was easy for him to lay hold on a line of thought and master it, and to follow the course of a book and see its bearing and drift almost from the beginning. He assiduously added to his originally scant acquaintance with the dead languages, and unquestionably neglected not the French; and was more familiar with theological literature, especially with Puritan writings, than two-thirds of our more pretentious erudite teachers and preachers. He knew so much that it was unnecessary for him to make a parade of his knowledge; and he saw so deeply into the springs of the human heart and the sources of social changes, and acquired information with such rare facility that he easily outranked

most of his enlightened contemporaries. As Joseph Cook has said, he had in perfection the art of keeping the reservoir well supplied, and the greater art of doing it by sagaciously directing the labors of others, as well as by the most discriminating endeavors of his own.

But while his ministry was always characterized by rare intelligence, it was rendered particularly noteworthy by its moral earnestness. Whatever its subject, he never appeared to be trifling, to be speaking against time, to be anxious to end the performance of a perfunctory duty; or as one who was heedless as to how the message would be received or whether it was worth receiving at all; but he carried into his every word a certain spirit that convinced the hearer that the man before him was honestly determined to do his duty. His voice lent itself instinctively to his theme. A warm, tender and impressive conversational manner at the outset drew to him all hearts; and then the soft, melodious pleadings, or the strong denun-

ciations, with all the varying tones possible to be conveyed by the incomparable organ at his command, held the vast congregation spell-bound and almost impotent in his hand.

In those glorious days of old when I have heard him at his best, and before he was weakened by suffering, the way he stood, the carriage of his body, the movement of his form, the smiles and shadows alternating on his countenance — in a word, his "expression" as Demosthenes would have termed it, was eloquence itself. He was never theatrical, his critics to the contrary notwithstanding; but in the years gone by to which I allude, frequently he was eminently dramatic. Indeed, all great orators are; for it is the vivid picturesque form that invests ideas with a living force, it is their embodiment in metaphor or figure that arrests thought by charming the imagination, and it is their interpretation in voice and gesture that commands attention; and without these qualities ideas are merely shivering

ghosts, intangible and ineffectual. Mr. Spurgeon, in his palmy days, preached all over, not violently, but composedly; not with affectation, but naturally; and of him it may be said truly, that never a sermon of his could really be printed, for it was never possible to print himself in its delivery.

Referring to the exceptional combination of gifts and graces that enhanced his personal influence in the pulpit, *The Christian Commonwealth*, of London, says editorially:

"The voice was that of Chrysostom, the ardor was that of Wesley, the unction was that of Savonarola, the doctrine was that of Bunyan, the wit was that of Thomas Adams, the originality was that of Christmas Evans, the fervor was that of John Howe, the boldness was that of Calvin, the simplicity was that of Whitfield, the pathos was that of Toplady. Yes, it was the composite character of Spurgeon's preaching which really accounted for its infinite charm. Herein he differed from

every other preacher. And herein is to be found the reason of the almost amusing perplexity of innumerable critics. Again and again he used to say, with a gleam of the eyes, that American hearers had accosted him in his vestry with refreshing candor, assuring him that they really wondered what it could be that made him so famous, as they had heard many more remarkable preachers than himself. They might as well have wondered why a kaleidoscope elicits delight with its endless varieties of beautiful forms flung out by the simplest materials."

Vigorous independence was an additional characteristic of his ministry. He was not one who carefully trimmed his sails to prevailing breezes, nor one who perpetually failed in pleasing anybody because his supreme purpose was to please everybody. Like Luther he took his stand, such as it was, and he could take none other, and he relied on God for assistance in his arduous task; and as Thomas Carlyle

expressed it, he very early in life acquired strength to stand by himself and live without and above praise. On one occasion he startled his hearers, when on the platform of the famous building in the Strand where so many great reforms have been advocated, by observing with some emphasis:

"A very kind friend has told me that while I was preaching in Exeter Hall, I ought to pay deference to the varied opinions of my hearers; that albeit I may be a Calvanist and a Baptist, I should recollect that there is a variety of creeds here. Now were I to preach nothing but what would please the whole lot of you, what on earth should I do? I preach what I believe to be true, and if the omission of a single truth that I believe would make me king of England throughout eternity, I would not leave it out. Those who do not like what I say have the option of leaving it. They come here, I suppose, themselves, and if the truth does not please them, they can leave it."

In other words, the commission he had received, or thought he had received, he would execute whether men would hear, or forbear to hear, knowing that he had to render an account to God. And perhaps no one realized his responsibility more profoundly than he did; for on one occasion he remarked to a friend that he had spoken to more people in one place more frequently than any man who had ever lived, and that God would expect from him a very strict account of so solemn a stewardship. It is only as we in our smaller place and narrower sphere, shall realize that we are ambassadors for God, that we will speak the message He has given us to speak without fear, and be continually true to our convictions of what He has revealed for the guidance and salvation of mankind. Probably the sentiment will be criticised, but nevertheless I hold to it, that in the long run a free pulpit is of more advantage to the world than an orthodox one that is not free; and that it is far better

VII.

ANOTHER element of power, particularly significant, remains to be noticed; viz., the eminently practical and spiritual purpose of this Modern Elijah. This, of course, is a phase of moral earnestness. It is the idle *dilettante fainéant* in the pulpit, who wanders loosely among the stars and can sweetly tell us of all things unnecessary to be believed, and who winds up his discourse with the softest and most uncompromising of benedictions, and who, even in his prayers steers carefully, so as not to commit himself to the Charybdis of Unitarianism or the Scylla of Orthodoxy, who aims at nothing and succeeds admirably in accomplishing his purpose. Ah me, for those lackadaisical souls who stand where Paul did

and who have never yet entered into that sublime passion that cried, "For the love of Christ constraineth us"; "We beseech you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God". These sentences breathed and interpreted with apostolic breadth and fervor, and with genuine apostolic conviction of their truth from all the pulpits in the land, would do more to settle the controversy between Christianity and error, spirituality and secularity, between virtue and vice, than all the higher criticism, than all reform movements, and magnificent programs of human amelioration now tolerated among the perplexed and bewildered children of Adam.

It ought to be known and remembered that the religious life of England shrivelled and almost died, beneath the style of preaching that had for its chief ornament and exponent the famous Dr. Blair, whose sermons are masterpieces of brilliant verbiage, comparable only to the gorgeous forests of the East, where a

miasma lurks among the flowers and in the luxuriant and deadly foliage. Partial deliverance from latitudinarianism and from a pretentious, though lifeless, eloquence was brought about in no small degree by the stirring ministry of the Wesleys, the sweet singing of the Topladys and the Ripleys, and the flame-like zeal of Whitefield. If history, therefore, teaches anything, it teaches that a fixed and settled purpose to arouse men to a sense of their sins, and to deliver them from indifference to the claims of God, to move their consciences and change their life, is indispensable in the sacred calling, if that calling is to be redeemed from the contumacious sneers of the world, and to be in any true sense a service of helpfulness to the race. But while I believe this moral earnestness to be vital to worthy success, it need not be identified with the profession of Calvinism as a scheme of doctrine. There are among us those who are so imbued with Genevan theology that they think Mr. Spurgeon's wonderful

usefulness was the legitimate result of loyalty to its interpretations of Holy Writ, forgetting that there are not a few respectable clergymen who adhere rigidly to these expositions and yet lack entirely — what was so conspicuous in the London preacher — ability to touch the conscience and move the people.

John Wesley was renowned in the Saviour's vineyard, and yet sympathized but little with Calvin's harsher dogmas. Others also have been honored in extending the triumphs of the King of Kings who have firmly rejected these views; and in my opinion, it is questionable whether the success of the preachers who espouse them is not proportionate to their silence regarding them rather than to their proclamation. This I infer from the fact that the Baptist Puritan in his addresses seemed to lay great stress on human responsibility; and while he upheld, as he ought, Divine Sovereignty, did not fail to insist with marked emphasis on man's moral agency. In other words, Mr.

Spurgeon's spiritual potency was not derived from Calvinism, but rather from his uncompromising belief that men and women are to be really saved by the Gospel — whose central glory is the crucified and risen Christ — and that in this manner and through these means, the preacher could render them the most efficient service. He always planned for immediate results. He expected someone to be converted or someone to be reclaimed; some life to be renovated or bettered by the words that fell from his lips. He studied the needs of his people; he tried to meet them, and a congregation could hardly ever have listened to him without the conviction that the pastor's thought and affectionate yearnings went out specifically and personally toward some of their number.

He said to me on one occasion: "Doctor, we usually get what we expect, and if we expect fifty or a hundred conversions a month, the Lord will not disappoint us. The trouble

with us is to bring our expectations up to the high level of God's willingness to bestow." Now it is this looking for returns, for interest on invested labor, that imparts, even to his printed sermons, much of their force and their significance. And just at this point we discern the weakness of not a few most excellent brethren who are dissatisfied with antique formulas of doctrines; and who are so busy puttering about definitions, and so anxious to pose as theological Columbuses, finding a new way across the old ocean of divine truth that has throbbed and heaved and filled the world with blessings for now these many years, that they have neither time nor heart to address themselves directly to the work of human conversion or even to the spiritual edification of their charge. Personally I do not object to their search, nor to their belief that the Bible has glories undiscovered yet, nor to their desire to re-state old doctrines in the terminology of modern scholarship; but I do object to the per-

petual parading of these aims in the pulpit as though the Church, after all, was but a debating club with no theories settled, with no immovable granite principles to rest on, and with no Divine vocation to instruct mankind, and to relieve the poor, to save childhood from corruption, womanhood from degradation, manhood from shame, and society from every kind and form of abomination. It is indeed a sad comment on eighteen hundred years of Christianity, if at this late day there is no rock under our feet, but only a bank of fog that may, alas! turn into a storm cloud, and bursting sweep away all our cherished hopes, and bury our sublime aspirations in undistinguishable ruin.

A young lady who had graduated in a prominent institution of learning, said to me not long since, "Really I am not interested in comments on the original version, nor in fine drawn distinctions, and theologies old and new; for my sole purpose in going to the House of God is to have my heart uplifted in worship, my

spiritual being informed by His Spirit, and my life redeemed from triviality and consecrated to a noble and enduring purpose." I agree with my young friend. I do not think the world is very anxious to know the opinions of its Sunday teachers on the comparative worth of various sacred forms and symbols; for as a rule it goes to church not to hear criticisms, but to receive conviction; not to foster its own doubts, but to have its own poor feeble faith encouraged and strengthened. Our hearers, in the majority of instances, are not particularly interested to know whether our theology be old or new, stagnant or advanced; and I modestly suggest that what is more important than either label is that it shall be made a system of actual profit to the people. A sick man values not the high-sounding names on the jars and bottles in an apothecary's shop. What he needs is medicine; and he knows that often these ticketed receptacles are empty of curative remedies. He pays

no attention, therefore, to what is formally indexed and titled, but demands from the chemist drugs and nostrums as prescribed by the physician. If your scheme, my brother, carries to the heart no realization of sin and leads to no desire for forgiveness, and directs not at all to the peace that is obtained through the Cross; then, if you will allow me to say it, it is rank and unadulterated heresy. But if it is fitted to produce spiritual results, and if it constrains you to anticipate such results, and if it brings to human souls a blessed sense of the Father's love and of the Son's brotherhood, with the possibility of redemption for every weary creature, then, though it may be a revolt against all the schools of Christendom, it is sound at bottom; and though it may be open to some degree of criticism, it has proved itself to be worthy of all acceptation.

VIII.

THERE is another aspect under which the subject of this sketch must be contemplated if we are to gain anything like an adequate idea of his greatness. He was as much a leader as he was a preacher, and therefore his wisdom as a worker is eminently entitled to consideration. If anything is to be accomplished in this world we must be prepared to push destiny a little. The poet sings:

> "Ah, well, the world is discreet,
> There are plenty to pause and wait;
> But here was a man who set his feet
> Sometimes in advance of fate."

Emerson says that the Greek artists wrought in societies or fraternities; that together they

thought out the plan and assisted each other in its execution. But unquestionably, in these groups there must have been some presiding and governing genius. And thus, it may be assumed, that while the Church is an organization where all are to work collectively for the realization of a grand ideal, the pastor is designed by Providence to be the inspiring mind, inciting all to generous emulation and devoted labor by the vigor of his thought and the intensity of his personal endeavors.

Mr. Spurgeon, from the beginning of his career, firmly believed that the minister ought never to say "go", but always "come"; and he himself was always in advance of his people, but drawing them hard after him by the cords of love and admiration. Col. Bentley, of Chicago, told me once of his own experience in trying to raise men for the United States army. He had prepared what he considered a most admirable appeal to the patriotism of his hearers; but when his eloquence was exhausted he

was amazed that no one stepped forward to enlist. His exhortation had proved in vain. At last it dawned on him that the men in the crowd were wondering why, if it was so noble a thing to die for one's country, Mr. Bentley himself did not volunteer. The truth burst on him like a thunder clap, and immediately he stepped to the front, put down his name on the roll, and promptly over one hundred followed; and the gallant gentleman thus took the initiative to a very honorable career. This is how the Puritan Standard-Bearer would have acted, had he been placed in similar circumstances. Through all the years of his ministry when a burden had to be carried, he lifted; when money had to be given, he gave; when battles had to be fought, he fought; when errors had to be assailed, he assailed; and would have regarded any man with amazement who should have expressed surprise at his so doing.

And yet some clergymen affect to be in profound doubt as to wherein lay the secret of the

London preacher's power. As I have already intimated, that is very difficult to determine; but I am very sure that he would not have had the influence he did have had he been less practically sagacious. He was not a dealer in pious piddle-paddle, neither was he a poor whiffler having no special nor settled aims to realize. Bountifully endowed with common sense, he saw that unless his vocation was made serviceable in benefiting the lives of multitudes about him, his success in life would be meagre indeed; and therefore, with sustained excellency, he gave himself to achievable benevolences, and has proven to the world the adaptation of the Puritan spirit to meet the crying exigencies of modern social degradation and suffering. In the management of such affairs, and in the performance of his general or specific work, he never permitted himself to be run by a committee or to abdicate his position of authority in favor of some pastor-maker deacon, rejoicing in a humble way to imitate the famous

king-maker — he of Warwick; nor did he ever shut himself up in his study so exclusively as to create the impression that the preparation of a thirty minutes' sermon to be delivered on Sunday was quite enough to exhaust his strength and unfit him for other duties. I am under the impression that if he had been spoken to on this point, with a sly twinkle in his eye, he would have remarked, that if the writing of a discourse was so fatiguing to the preacher it would undoubtedly be infinitely wearisome to the hearer. He always referred to Sabbath ministrations as a delight and joy, a privilege that refreshed him and that qualified him for outside labors; and consequently he and his people rejoiced in the proclamation of the Word, even if it did run beyond prescribed limits of time, and from it derived inspiration to do valiantly for God.

I heard an eminent layman, some months ago, in prayer-meeting, express the thought that mediocre ability in the pulpit, supple-

mented by coöperation in the pew, would be a greater blessing to that congregation than commanding talent without such coöperation. As I listened to him, I could not but inquire, wherefore the necessity for so disastrous an alternative? Why should genius be doomed to isolation and commonplace be especially sustained and succored? Surely, if the latter, through the faithful support and endeavors of the laity, may be rendered available for good, the former, thus supplemented and upheld, would prove irresistible in overcoming evil and establishing righteousness. As I mused, it occurred to me that probably this unwonted severance was to be explained by the impression unintentionally made here and there by ministers, that they are not in reality dependent on the assistance of their brethren. And indeed it must be confessed that some of our craft leave little for the laity to do; for they themselves do most of the speaking and most of the praying in the devotional gatherings;

and at times even set the choir master aside and lead a kind of musical forlorn hope. They attend to all visiting, or discourage visiting altogether; and decide issues in a deliciously infallible way, for the congregation; and even find it hard to leave the women to run a Benevolent Society alone — and I suppose, as a just retribution, in some instances, they are permitted to collect their own salaries or go without. Monopoly in the pulpit is about as poor a business as monopoly in trade. Let Herbert Spencer's law of Evolution be taken to heart by our divines, and let them not forget that all things move from the simple to the complex, from the single to the manifold, and that therefore in the higher stages of civilization labor is divided and broken up into innumerable specialties. The application of this principle to the organization and direction of our churches would do immeasurable good; and would be about the best use that the philosophy of evolution could be put to at the

present stage of the controversy regarding its relation to theology.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle used to be, and probably will continue to be, the centre of innumerable spiritual industries. These manifold activities recalled the vision of Ezekiel, with its wheels within wheels; and the living creature in the wheels, who carried them with him whithersoever he went, suggested at once the mighty man of God whose heart shall beat no more on earth. It is to be noted that he had around him some tried and worthy helpers, among them Deacon Olney, whose funeral we attended a year ago in London. He was a man of position and of wealth, and delighted in spending and being spent for the furtherance of the truth, and that the masses might be kept in touch with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is gratifying to know that his son has succeeded him in office at the Tabernacle; and that with him a younger body of consecrated laborers are likely to uphold the standard

that has fallen from the dead hand of the leader. May the number of such laymen be increased on both sides of the Atlantic; laymen who will not prize the Church for the social standing or religious prominence it may give; but for the opportunity it affords them of rendering their lives a benefaction to the poor and neglected. These have not been altogether wanting in America, or Christianity would be far less than it is to-day in beauty and strength. But I am sure we shall agree that had we more of this type we should have fewer evils to deplore in society; and that it ought to be the settled purpose of all members of the Church to work hand to hand and heart to heart with their chosen pastors for the triumph of the Redeemer's cause.

It may be of advantage to meditate on some of Mr. Spurgeon's personal qualities and peculiar methods in connection with the various movements which he inaugurated and which owed their success to his fostering care. The

report has obtained currency that he once thanked God for being pastor of a large church, as he did not have grace enough to maintain the sacred office successfully in a small one. He may have been, and doubtless was, the best judge of his fitness for either position; but there is one thing certain, that in the wider sphere he owed much of his ascendency as a leader to his interest in his co-laborers. Whether this resulted from grace or from natural capacity and insight I cannot tell, but it is a fact that he remembered persons, could call them by name, and even after months of separation would recollect them as soon as they presented themselves. Many Americans who have visited London will readily recognize the justice of what I state. Introduced to the Tabernacle pastor, he never seemed to pay them the poor compliment of forgetting them. Often when I have entered the vestry after the morning service, and he had taken me by the hand and had said, in his friendly way, "Doctor"—

it almost seemed as though I had left him just the day before, although probably I had been absent for more than a year.

The memory that served him so well in dealing with American guests was unquestionably an element of power in influencing his own people. They realized that they were not an undistinguishable mass of humanity preached at by the minister as a crowd, but rather as a multitude of units for each one of whom he felt a personal concern and for each of whom he had direct sympathy. A church is too big when the members have to be dealt with as a vast herd of Texan steers, having each the denominational brand indeed, but unknown by face and name to the zealous drover and his assistants who are impelling them along the dusty ways toward fat and fertile pasturage; or perhaps it were better to say, that the pastor is not big enough himself, unless he knows how to provide for the spiritual interests of each soul, and can care for every one of his

numerous charge at first hand, or by associates in office, as if that one were the sole object of his solicitude. Very likely someone may regard my attitude on this subject as extreme, and may reply that such attention to detail, to such trifling matters, ought not to be expected from a clergyman whose mind naturally is supremely occupied with the latest phases of modern thought, and with the marvellous riches of Homeric or Shakespearean genius. But let me illustrate:

A manufacturer bought the residence, and the contents thereof, of a noble lord whose misfortunes or misdoings had resulted in his bankruptcy. When the new owner took possession he missed a secretary from the collection which he had purchased, and immediately wrote to the former proprietor. In substance he received this reply: His lordship had taken the secretary, not supposing that the wealthy buyer would mind such a trifle. The answer sent, though laconic, was certainly

adequate. The merchant said, "If I had not cared for trifles, I never could have bought your estate; and if you had cared for them, you never would have been obliged to sell it." The application of the anecdote is hardly necessary. The trouble is, in business and in our religious concerns we are not sufficiently attentive to little things; we do not think it worth our while to know one face from another; to distinguish between the different sheep of the flock, and consequently many who are lame and who ought to be carried, perish by the way, and others who are dying are left to loneliness and neglect. Can it be a secret why a clergyman does not succeed remarkably when he conducts a funeral, supposing that he is burying the husband, when in fact the wife lies dead before him, and he is not sufficiently interested in his vocation to know the difference until the services are ended? Strange as such an incident may seem to an ordinary reader, and possibly without parallel in the veracious annals of

ministerial absent-mindedness, nevertheless it is unquestionably true; and what is of even more importance, goes far to explain why so many of us come short of the promise of our youth, and fail to leave a lasting imprint on the characters and careers of those with whom we associate.

Into no such mistake as this could Mr. Spurgeon have fallen, though of course he was not infallible. The nearest that he ever came to a blunder of this kind, I suppose, is recorded in a very clever story related some months ago in the *North American Review.* In a throng of people an earnest man tried to grasp his hand, and at last succeeding, inquired in a very vehement manner whether the famous preacher did not recognize him. For once in his life the "famous preacher" was at fault; he did not, however, hum and haw and say, "My dear fellow, the fact is I have forgotten your name, but your face is quite familiar to me"; but he owned right out that he had no recollection of

him whatever. Whereupon the excited individual replied, very much to Mr. Spurgeon's amusement, "Well, that is singular, seeing you rendered me the greatest service one man could render another — you buried my wife." We must, of course, do the bereaved husband the justice to suppose that he did not mean exactly what his words denoted; but nevertheless it was a good joke at the expense of the usually exact and careful pastor, and one that I have no doubt he must frequently have repeated with considerable relish.

IX.

MANY passages of striking beauty occur in the sermons of our fallen leader that could only have been spoken or written by a man of genuine poetic temperament. It is perhaps not too much to say that were such passages changed by a master hand to verse and duly clothed with an adequate art form, the world would recognize in the dead preacher one who might, with sufficient culture, have ranked with Goldsmith, Prior and Gray. It is a fact not unworthy of recognition, that prominent divines at various periods have excelled as bards of sacred song. Some of Luther's hymns may justly be regarded as immortal; and not a few, penned by Toplady, Ripon, Heber, Keble and the Wesleys, the Church will

not readily permit to die. While I recognize Mr. Spurgeon's genius as expressing itself transcendently in prose, yet in the following lines, as in others that might be quoted, the fires of the muse burn as in a true minstrel soul:

"Amidst us our Beloved stands,
And bids us view His piercéd hands;
Points to the wounded feet and side,
Blest emblems of the crucified.

"What food luxurious loads the board,
When at His table sits the Lord!
The wine how rich, the bread how sweet,
When Jesus deigns the guests to meet!

"If now, with eyes defiled and dim,
We see the signs but see not Him,
O may His love the scales displace,
And bid us see Him face to face.

"Our former transports we recount,
When with Him in the holy mount.
These cause our souls to thirst anew,
His marred but lovely face to view.

"Thou glorious Bridegroom of our hearts,
Thy present smile a heaven imparts;
O lift the veil, if veil there be,
Let every saint Thy beauties see."

* * * * * *

"Our bodies are the servants of our souls,
And yield obedience to their lordly sway.
Our souls have daily need of heavenly food;
And if the bread which nourisheth our flesh
Cannot, because of grossness, feed the mind,
'Tis seeming that it aid to build the house
In which the sacred banquet shall be spread."

But it is neither in the form of verse nor of prose that God's servant most expressively clothed the melodious thoughts that filled his soul. A poem may be carved in stone, or communicated to the canvas, and likewise may shine forth in some sweet personal grace or gracious deed; but marble would not speak, nor the picture fascinate, nor the action wrought charm and thrill, unless behind them were ideas equal in beauty to themselves. They become possible because something actually is; they

are but the expression of an ideal that struggles within for birth; they could no more be the outcome of a dull, commonplace, grovelling intellect than the stars could have sprung from an immeasurable, undiversified mass of ice and snow mournfully and monotonously pursuing its way in space. Hence it is, that knowing what I know, and what, indeed, every one else may know of Mr. Spurgeon's educational and philanthropical plans and movements, and seeing how much there is in them of sweet pity and of tender charity, of high hope for the race, and of noble personal sacrifice, I delight to think of him as one endued with the poetic gift which, touched by the spirit of the Heavenly Father, wrought itself out in daily psalms of practical beneficence, as sweet to sad suffering hearts, as the gentle and consoling strains of David's harp.

Our departed friend did not believe that benevolent secularism could save the world, or that improved social conditions would neces-

sarily involve the promise and potency of perfected humanity. His supreme confidence for the regeneration of society lay in the preached Word and in the renewing influence of the Holy Ghost. But at the same time, he did not favor severing the work of charity from the work of grace; for if the Master, when on earth, could care for suffering bodies, surely the disciples are not exempt from the obligation to imitate the Divine example. He objected to outside non-evangelical organizations dispensing the charities that ought to be administered by the Church herself; and while he did not discourage the benefactions of any class of men, or interfere with the State in its proper care for the needy, he evidently realized that the Kingdom of Christ could not afford to transfer its responsibilities for the temporal well-being of mankind to any agency other than its own. "The poor ye have with you always," said the Redeemer to His followers; but He did not leave this heritage

to be entrusted to the tender mercies of a central body of perfunctory philanthropists, who distribute the alms committed to them mechanically and with business-like precision, but with no thought or care for the genuine welfare of the recipients. His Church is the centre of man's hope both for time and for eternity; and she is not only to administer in things that make for the soul's peace, but in those that make for the body's health and comfort as well. The bread of life is not the only bread she is to give with her own hands, nor the robe of righteousness the only robe she is to put on those who are perishing in the crowded thoroughfares of heartless cities. Shame to her when she fails to have thought or energy for the discharge of her commission in its completeness! Shame to her when she can abdicate her glory and sit in gorgeous meeting-houses criticising preachers, who with faltering accents are pleading tenderly the cause of the wronged and wretched; and 'shame to her

when her arms are too weak, and her hands too delicate to bring the maimed, the halt and the blind to the feet of Him who lovingly said, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them," a Gospel that opens the prison doors, rends fetters of brass, and that never sent the poor away hungry for bread. As Sir Edwin Arnold writes:

> "The way to God is by the road of men;
> Find thy far Heaven in near humanity;
> Love thy seen brother as thyself! Thereby
> Thou lovest Him unseen, Who is the All!"

This the Church ought never to forget; neither ought she to forget that Jesus himself has magnified the physical, and has taught that He is as truly honored in gentle acts directed toward temporal relief and happiness as He is in those that are exclusively spiritual in scope and purpose. Hence, at the end, Christ shall say:

"Inasmuch as ye did it to the least
Of these My brothers, it was done to Me!
Aye! 'twas to Me—and 'twas to God through Me—
Ye gave that cup of water! I lay sick
With Him ye succored; I was languishing
In prison with the broken hearts ye cheered;
That was my nakedness ye covered up,
Clothing My Poor; I was the babe ye fed;
I was that widow whom ye visited;
Share My joy now, who help My Father then!
Enter ye in!"

Gen. Wolfe, beneath the Heights of Abraham, said to his officers that he would rather have written Gray's "Elegy" than to achieve the conquest of Quebec; and I have thought that I would rather have been instrumental in founding Stockwell Orphanage, than either to have penned the famous poem or to have accomplished the glorious feat at arms which ended French dominancy in North America. The pastor of the Tabernacle, oppressed by manifold cares that had crowded upon him since his arrival in London, January, 1854, had

gone from the New Park Street Chapel to Surrey Music Hall, and from the Hall to the location that has been rendered ever memorable by his consecrated labors, and with these various changes had become more and more conscious that there was an additional burden to be assumed. Like Robert Raikes, he heard the voice of the children crying, "We are as sheep without a shepherd"; and though he knew not what he could do for their protection and education, yet having committed the matter to the compassion of God, he determined to do something. Just at the moment when assistance was least expected, a Mrs. Hillyard sent a letter to him offering the sum of one hundred thousand dollars for the establishment of an orphanage for fatherless boys. It ought to be said that this lady was the widow of an Episcopal clergyman, but she seemed to realize that the generous heart and sagacious judgment of the successful Puritan pastor would render her gift effective. Probably, also, she selected

him in preference to a rector or bishop of her own communion, as he was constantly being brought face to face with the problems of poverty, and was in a better position than almost any member of the Established Church to appreciate the sufferings and the necessities of the indigent.

The deed of incorporation bears date 1866, and the money that had been donated, it appears, was invested as a permanent endowment, while a subscription was opened for the purpose of erecting the necessary buildings. A city merchant, Mr. Moore, initiated a popular subscription by giving twelve hundred and fifty dollars himself, and soon the necessary funds were secured by which a good-sized tract of land — two acres and a half — was bought and a series of buildings erected. It was arranged for the inmates to live as families instead of being shut up in one immense structure as though they were infant soldiers destined to the discomforts of dreary barracks.

Perhaps two or three extracts from Mr. Spurgeon's journal may indicate the spirit in which he engaged in this great enterprise:

"June, 1867 — The Lord is beginning to appear for us in the matter of the Orphanage; but as yet He has not opened the windows of heaven as we desire and expect. We wait in prayer and faith. We need no less than £10, 000 to erect the buildings, *and it will come;* for the Lord will answer the prayer of faith.

"July, 1867 — We have been waiting upon the Lord in faith and prayer concerning our Orphanage; but He is pleased at present to try us. As we have no object in view but the glory of God, by the instruction of fatherless boys in the ways of the Lord, having a special view to their soul's salvation, we had hoped that many of the Lord's people would at once have seen the usefulness and practical character of the enterprise, and have sent us substantial aid immediately. The Lord's way, however, is the best, and we rejoice in it, let it

be what it may: if the work is to be one of time and long effort, so let it be, if thereby God's name is magnified.

"We have engaged a sister to receive the first four orphans into her own hired house until the Orphanages are ready. One beloved friend, the original donor, has given her plate to be sold for this object, and in so doing has set an example to all believers who have surplus silver, which ought to be put to better use than by lying wrapped up in a box.

"August, 1867 — Let the facts, which with deep gratitude we record this month, strengthen the faith of believers. In answer to many fervent prayers, the Lord has moved His people to send in during the last month, in different amounts, toward the general funds of the Orphanage, the sum of £1,075, for which we give thanks unto the name of the Lord. More especially do we see the gracious hand of God in the following incidents: A lady who has often aided us in the work of the College,

having been spared to see the twenty-fifth anniversary of her marriage-day, her beloved husband presented her with £500 as a token of his ever-growing love to her. Our sister has called upon us, and dedicated the £500 to the building of one of the houses, to be called *The Silver Wedding House.* The Lord had, however, another substantial gift in store, to encourage us in our work; for a day or two ago a brother beloved in the Lord called upon us on certain business, and when he had retired, he left in a sealed envelope the sum of £600, which is to be expended in erecting another house. This donation was as little expected as the first, except that our faith expects that all our needs will be supplied in the Lord's own way. The next day, when preaching in the open air, an unknown sister put an envelope into my hand, enclosing £20 for the College and another £20 for the Orphanage. 'What hath God wrought!'"

These quotations might be multiplied, and it

would afford me pleasure to transcribe several in addition were I intent on writing a Biography instead of penning a simple Monograph.

I had the pleasure of visiting Stockwell Orphanage, some years ago, in company with its founder, and enjoyed very much two hours spent with the fatherless lads. I do not know how it is now, but in those days the boys did not wear a uniform or regulation clothes, neither was their hair cut in the same fashion; nor did they look, each one, but a monotonous repetition of the other. They constituted as cheerful and as bright a looking company as ever I met, and there was something genuinely English in the way they disported themselves when their beloved friend, himself, appeared among them. No one could have taken more sincere delight than he did in their happiness, and indeed he seemed to feel a personal interest in his wards individually. On approaching a group of houses, I observed on one of the pillars of the entrance the Sword and Trowel

insignia, and on the other the text, "The Lord will provide". Passing under the archway leading to the quadrangle my eye was cheered by the familiar words, "A Father to the fatherless and a judge of the widow is God in His holy habitation". Two other inscriptions impressed me likewise. The first, "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these"; and the second, "Your Heavenly Father feedeth them".

The Rev. Vernon J. Charlesworth was in charge when I was permitted to look over the institution, or, as its patrons preferred to call it, "The Home"; and I realized that he was admirably qualified for his responsible station. Many hundreds of boys have been helped by his manly character and faithful counsels, and are frequently being heard from now as successful workers in various departments of life. Some are excellent mechanics, others skillful clerks, and others yet prosperous merchants, and a large majority of them are worthy follow-

ers of our blessed Saviour. On attending worship at the Tabernacle, I have always been impressed, as the boys have gathered on the platform just in front of the pulpit and have sat there realizing that in the preacher they had not merely a teacher but a friend, and one who was providing for their every interest. How fondly they must have loved him, and how anxious they must have been to justify by their good conduct his fatherly oversight and love. Since 1880, a number of girls have likewise been cared for, though of course in separate buildings, arranged with special reference to their needs. In 1879, the twenty thousand dollars necessary to purchase land for this benefaction were secured, and when the announcement was made the entire congregation rose and sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow". Never more magnificently sounded the Doxology than then; and yet the hundreds of beneficiaries, as they have been saved from ignorance and degradation, and as they have

been taught to uplift their innocent hands in prayerful supplication, in themselves have formed a tribute of homage sublimer than any that mortal voices have ever rendered their Creator. Such philanthropies are grateful to the heart of the All-father, God, even as they are more than glorious to the Church that has established them in His name.

These are the poems we should desire to write; thrilling epics these that stir the human heart. No Iliads these, such as were sung by Homer to the listening tribes of Greece; but delightful, inspiring and grand; for they tell of wounds that have been healed, of wretchedness and sorrow that have been tenderly assuaged, and of victories won in the domains of peace more wonderful by far than any achieved by Grecian prowess or by Trojan strategy. Would that the Gracious Spirit would awaken our American Protestants to the need that exists for the founding of hospitals for the sick, refuges for the indigent, homes

for the young, and asylums for the aged. Some such noble charities already gladden many portions of the land; but still how many children there are who are growing up in ignorance and neglect upon the streets, or who are wasting and withering away in filth and famine; and how many decrepit and despairing venerable men and women there are who have but rags for a covering, a crust for food, a tattered hovel for a resting place, and whose attenuated hands are clasped in agony, while the burden of their prayer is merely for a hospitable grave!

X.

ANOTHER movement, though probably to the minds of our readers not as poetic as the establishment of an orphanage, originated with the conversion of a young man, who in 1855 wrote to Mr. Spurgeon for spiritual encouragement and direction. The reply to this communication has in it some admirable passages, and one, especially, to which I desire to invite the attention of those persons who allow themselves to be unduly perplexed by the doctrine of predestination. The preacher says to his young friend —

"You ask me a very important question: 'Are you one of God's elect?' This is a question neither you nor I can answer at present. I will ask you an easier one: 'Are you a sin-

ner?' Can you say 'Yes?' All say yes; but then they do not know what the word sinner means. A sinner is one who has broken all his Maker's commands, despised His name, and run into rebellion against the Most High. A sinner deserves hell, yea, the hottest place in hell; and if he be saved, it must be entirely by unmerited mercy. Now, if you are such a sinner, I am glad to be able to tell you the only way of salvation, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus'.

"I think you have not yet really understood what believing means. You are, I trust, really awakened, but you do not see the door yet. I advise you seriously to be much alone, I mean as much as you can; let your groans go up to heaven if you cannot pray; attend as many services as possible, and if you go with an earnest desire for a blessing it will come very soon. But why not believe now? You have only to believe that Jesus is able and willing to save, and then trust yourself to Him."

But what is more important than the letter

itself, is the fact that this correspondence gave rise to what has been known for many years as the Pastor's College. The youth whom the London preacher, himself then only a little more than a boy, tried to instruct, was anxious to undertake Christian labor, but was sadly in need of preparation. What could be done? How should he be trained? And was there really not need for an educational institution that would supply a body of workers fitted to deal with the classes least amenable to the shifting or advancing tendencies of intellectual culture? At this crisis the pastor of the Tabernacle sent for the Rev. George Rogers, who had been in the ministry for over thirty-six years, and after a conference, the school that has since become famous was commenced in 1856 with one student — Mr. Medhurst — who is at this day a successful Baptist preacher, and has a brave son consecrated to the cause of Christ as missionary in China. It is worthy of recollection that Mr. Rogers accomplished

his real life work in connection with this Theological Seminary, and yet was comparatively an old man when he assumed the role of Professor. Extensive erudition, sparkling wit, a rare, racy style, and an undoubted familiarity with biblical literature, rendered him at once effective and popular. What is singular about this appointment is, that Mr. Rogers himself was not a Baptist, but belonged to the Congregational or Independent body, and yet for many years gave acceptable instruction to a large class of young men preparing for the pulpit of the Baptist denomination. With the rise of this school, evening classes were formed that were opened to all who desired a substantial addition to their stock of knowledge, and who, while pursuing various secular vocations, desired to qualify themselves for a larger degree of Christian usefulness. The students who were studying with especial reference to the ministry, were at first boarded by different members of the church without charge, or for a very inade-

quate compensation, and received their education without money and without price. A commodious building for their accommodation, at the cost of some seventy-five thousand dollars, was ultimately erected, and has afforded a home for a large number of worthy youthful scholars.

It may be interesting to know that up to 1880 the College had sent out some five hundred laborers into the vineyard of the Lord, and that unquestionably later figures must show a proportionate increase for the past ten years. Many of these ministers are scattered abroad in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Spain, Italy, India, China and Japan, and not a few among them have founded the churches over which they now preside. It was reported at an anniversary meeting, that during ten years these brethren had baptised 20,676 converts, and of course the amount of unreportable good accomplished, must far exceed these visible and tangible statistics.

Much has been written regarding Mr. Spurgeon's own lack of college training; and at this point it may not be amiss to quote what he himself has said on this subject, remembering, as I have already stated in a preceding part of this Monograph, that while he did not enjoy the advantages of the highest and broadest culture, he was always, from the beginning, a natural and diligent student. These are his own words:

"Soon after I had begun, in 1852, to preach the Word in Waterbeach, I was strongly advised, by my father and others, to enter Stepney, now Regent's Park College, to prepare more fully for the ministry. Knowing that learning is never an incumbrance, and is often a great means of usefulness, I felt inclined to avail myself of the opportunity of attaining it, although I believed I might be useful without a college training. I consented to the opinion of friends that I should be more useful with it. Dr. Angus, the tutor of the col-

lege, visited Cambridge, where I then resided, and it was arranged that we should meet at the house of Mr. Macmillan, the publisher. Thinking and praying over the matter, I entered the house at exactly the time appointed, and was shown into a room where I waited patiently for a couple of hours, feeling too much impressed with my own insignificance and the greatness of the tutor from London to venture to ring the bell and inquire the cause of the unreasonably long delay.

"At last, patience having had her perfect work, the bell was set in motion, and on the arrival of the servant, the waiting young man of eighteen was informed that the doctor had tarried in another room, and could stay no longer, so had gone off by train to London. The stupid girl had given no information to the family that any one called, and he had been shown into the drawing-room, consequently the meeting never came about, although designed by both parties. I was not a little disappointed

at the moment; but have a thousand times since then thanked the Lord very heartily for the strange providence which forced my steps into another and far better path.

"Still holding to the idea of entering the Collegiate Institution, I thought of writing and making an immediate application; but this was not to be. That afternoon, having to preach at a village station, I walked slowly in a meditating frame of mind over Midsummer Common to the little wooden bridge which leads to Chesterton, and in the midst of the Common I was startled by what seemed to me to be a loud voice, but which may have been a singular illusion; whichever it was the impression it made on my mind was most vivid; I seemed very distinctly to hear the words, 'Seekest thou great things for thyself, seek them not!' This led me to look at my position from a different point of view, and to challenge my motives and intentions. I remembered my poor but loving people to whom I ministered,

and the souls which had been given me in my humble charge; and although at that time I anticipated obscurity and poverty as the result of the resolve, yet I did there and then renounce the offer of collegiate instruction, determining to abide for a season at least with my people, and to remain preaching the Word so long as I had strength to do it. Had it not been for those words, I had not been where I am now. Although the ephod is no longer worn by a ministering priest, the Lord guides His people by His wisdom, and orders all their paths in love; and in times of perplexity, by ways mysterious and remarkable, he says to them, 'This is the way; walk ye in it'.

"I am more and more glad that I never went to College. God sends such sunshine on my path, such smiles of grace, that I cannot regret if I have forfeited all my prospects for it. I am conscious I held back from love to God and His cause; and I had rather be poor in His service than rich in my own. I have all

that heart can wish for; yea, God giveth more than my desire. My congregation is as great and loving as ever. During all the time I have been at Waterbeach I have had a different house for my home every day. Fifty-two families have thus taken me in; and I have still six other invitations not yet accepted. Talk about the people not caring for me because they give me so little! I dare tell anybody under Heaven 'tis false! They do all they can."

It has seemed to me that to the sense of his own early deficiencies and the trying experiences through which he must have passed in acquiring knowledge without the assistance of eminent instructors, may be traced his determination to give young men, who were anxious for enlarged usefulness, such opportunities for intellectual development as would save them from the discouragements he had been obliged to overcome single handed, and such as would serve to qualify them for the various exacting

duties of pastoral life in this "nineteenth century of illumination" — as Canon Farrar aptly terms it. The curriculum of the Pastor's College has been criticised as too meagre, and as not affording the student an education sufficiently comprehensive for the times; but it ought always to be remembered that the plan of study adopted by this institution was never designed to be a substitute for university training, and its President never underestimated the value of higher and ampler advantages. Nor should it be forgotten that until within a recent period it has not been an easy thing for Nonconformists to obtain the privileges of Oxford or of Cambridge. Indeed, I have the honor of being myself acquainted with one among the first of dissenting scholars permitted to graduate at Cambridge, and he is not yet an exceedingly venerable gentleman. We must consequently make allowances both for the peculiarities of Mr. Spurgeon's surroundings, and for the pressure of necessity for

what may seem to be superficial in the Pastor's College. It was devised and inaugurated as an institution for practical equipment, and as such it has unquestionably justified its existence. While the students may not have been taught the art of interweaving much of polite literature in their discourses, and while they may not have been able to acquire the rare lucidity of their President's style, nevertheless, they have received valuable and accurate information; they have likewise obtained a complete knowledge of Holy Scripture; and have listened to sagacious suggestions regarding pastoral duties, and cautions against overdoing, against fanaticism, and against perpetually running after this or that tribe of religious gypsies who insist on encamping in the environments of God's holy city.

An incident in the life of Cecil may, perhaps, be taken as an illustration of the principal ends contemplated by this popular school of the prophets. In conversation with Dr.

Bacon, who had a living near Oxford, and who was termed "the Father of the University", he informed him of the very recondite studies he was pursuing, expecting to receive his approval. But the venerable Doctor replied, "You are quite wrong — quite wrong. When I was young like you, I could turn any piece of Hebrew into Greek verse with ease, but when I was settled in this parish I found I was wholly unfitted for my charge. I had, in reality, no furniture suited to the locality. The people, indeed, thought me a very great man, but that was their stupendous ignorance, for I knew as little as they did, that is, of what it was most important for them to know. I at once set to work to remedy my deplorable deficiencies; and you, my good Cecil, study chiefly those things that you can turn to account in your future life." And it is worthy of notice that the very latest utterances on the subject of education have run in this direction, and that not unlikely Greek and Latin, except-

ing in special classical courses, will be supplanted largely, if not entirely, by French and German in our institutions of learning, or by other utilitarian studies.

But be that as it may, Mr. Spurgeon was wise enough to see that a necessity existed in England and the Colonies for a class of men sufficiently qualified to teach and to lead, who should be preëminently men of affairs, and who should not be obliged, after they had been ordained, to consume all their time, to the neglect of parish labors, in filling up the mental reservoir. In this country the necessity for such a school is not as apparent; for here young men who desire to prepare for the ministry can acquire a liberal education practically without cost. We have not only Universities of the highest grade, but Theological Seminaries of the first rank where the student can obtain the most generous culture if he is only industrious and conscientious, even though he may be destitute of pecuniary resources.

These great advantages ought not to be neglected by candidates for the ministry. Should they regard them with indifference, when it is too late, they will from bitter experience know something of the regrets which Sir Walter Scott expresses in his *Autobiography:* "If it should fall to the lot of any youth to peruse these pages, let such a youth remember it is with the deepest regret that I recollect in my manhood the opportunities for learning which I neglected in my youth; that through every part of my literary career I have felt pinched and hampered by my own ignorance; and that I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation of learning and science." I am not inclined to favor imitations of Mr. Spurgeon's well-known college on this continent; for I am profoundly convinced that no clergyman, especially in America, can be too thoroughly equipped for his work. But unquestionably

here, as in the old world, there is a place and a large place for what may be termed Training Schools, in which laymen, and women, also, may be duly instructed and fitted for earnest public labors and for house to house religious visiting, and for successful Sabbath School teaching. Let us have these, perhaps one in every Commonwealth, and thus put an end to the blunders of amateur evangelists and reformers; and let us send out into the various benighted regions of our land such persons, and only such, as are skilled in the precious work of winning souls to Christ. Then will their mission be permanently beneficial to humanity.

I shall not dwell on other activities for which the Tabernacle has been for many years conspicuous. The great Church has maintained the almshouses founded by the venerable Dr. Ripon many years ago, but on a larger scale and under a broader and wiser management; and has provided day schools for hosts of chil-

dren who otherwise would have grown up in ignorance; and has distributed millions of pages of religious literature by the hands of consecrated colporteurs through numerous dark and squalid neighborhoods; and has likewise cared for the sick; and has not even neglected, what to many may seem a trifling thing indeed, the opening and sustaining of flower missions which have gladdened multitudes of hearts in dark and miry streets where eyes are deprived of the fair sight of nature's fragrant beauties that bring us so much nearer to God and Paradise. I am indebted to Rev. Dr. J. N. Murdock's admirable summary of Mr. Spurgeon's philanthropic work for the following inspiring figures:

"In January, 1891, the Church in London consisted of 5,600 members, with 130 lay preachers, 37 mission stations in the Metropolitan District, with 22 Sunday and Ragged Schools, and an aggregate of 8,000 scholars. It had also associations for Evangelists and

Colporteurs, which employed 75 laborers, distributed through 33 counties of England, who held religious services and distributed Scriptures and religious books in the more destitute places." Well does Dr. Murdock, when referring "to the masterful band of helpers" in these gigantic undertakings, add: "Who but he could have evoked their powers, and who but he could have selected and assigned them their appropriate places? The intuitive perception of personal qualities and the adjustment of men to their work, is one of the most important functions of leadership in all branches of human affairs."

Acting as the brain centre of so complicated a system of nerves that necessarily transmitted much of his own vitality to innumerable objects, we can very well understand how at times he should have grown somewhat restive, and have found it hard to endure the tediousness in counsel and action of some of his colleagues. He is reported to have said, that

"Lord, lead me not into temptation" meant to him, "lead me not into a Committee meeting." Constituted as he was, and conscious of the qualities of generalship, he was occasionally impatient of control, and very decided as to his own course. When the Tabernacle was to be built a committee of thirty was appointed to direct in the work. Calling the brethren together, the pastor remarked: "I hear that some of you are doubtful as to the success of this undertaking. If so, go through that door and stay there." At another conference he repeated the statement, and about a dozen went. Then he inquired whether any of the ten remaining were disposed to depart, and three withdrew; and on the close of the Gideon-like transaction, he prayed with the devoted and faithful seven, and with them marched on to victory. Such is the stuff genuine leaders are made of; and where they think and act, they stimulate to innumerable and incalculable enterprises, as he did whose

spiritual industries have excited the world's wondering admiration.

I pray you consider me not irreverent or unappreciative when I declare that I have frequently been more impressed by the huge and almost unsightly Metropolitan Tabernacle, than I have ever been by the venerable majesty and solemn beauty of Westminster Abbey. For me, as for others, the Abbey has manifold attractions; and as I have stood beneath its roof of stone, or wandered down the long drawn aisles, and been charmed by the soft light streaming through the rich stained glass, I have not failed to be deeply moved by the pathos of its sepulchres, treasuring the dust of former generations. But this historic structure, half church and half mausoleum, although it has a present significance and utility, always to me recalls the past, and seems preëminently to belong to other days and to be a gorgeous monument of what has been and shall be no more forever. But it is otherwise

with the Metropolitan Tabernacle. That has a modern air about it, something, indeed, also of a vast workshop; but a workshop where humanity is being molded and fashioned after a divine pattern. As I have sat within its homely walls and on its uncushioned seats and have noted its lack of ecclesiastical adornment, I have thought of its greater value to England than gilded tombs of extinct Plantagenets and pretentious monuments reared to the memory of once famous bishops and more famous actresses. For there, we confront, not the dead but the living, and dream not of former achievements but of future possibilities; and behold manifold labors hourly performed, not for the sake of immortalizing names on earth, but that souls may be rendered immortal in the heavens.

XI.

I HAVE not referred to the Puritan preacher's private life. Doubtless the vulgar curiosity of multitudes will lead them to pry into and comment on domestic affairs concerning which they can have but very superficial knowledge. Home is, in a peculiar sense, the domain of the wife, and without her consent its sacredness should never be violated. What Mrs. Spurgeon may authorize to be published, will unquestionably, in due course of time, be prepared, either by her own hands, or by those she may herself select. It is, however, permitted us to thank God for the perpetual serenity, and for the Christian joyousness which pervaded the circle of which she has been for so

many years the mistress and queen. Without impropriety we may, of course, quote what she herself has put in print, though for a different object, concerning the happy days now ended, when she and her loved one walked hand in hand together. When moving from Nightingale Lane to Westwood, Mrs. Spurgeon penned these charming lines:

"The heart yearns over a place endeared by an intimate acquaintance of twenty-three years, and full of happy or solemn associations. Every nook and corner, both of house and garden, abounds with sweet or sorrowful memories, and the remembrance of manifold mercies clings like a rich tapestry to the walls of the desolate rooms. On this spot nearly a quarter of a century of blissful wedded life has been passed, and though both husband and wife have been called to suffer severe physical pain and months of weakness within its boundary, our home has been far oftener a 'Bethel' to us than a 'Bochim'. The very walls might cry

out against us as ungrateful, did we not silence them by our ceaseless thanksgiving; for the Lord has here loaded us with benefits, and consecrated every inch of space with tokens of His great loving-kindness. The sun of His goodness has photographed every portion of our dear home upon our hearts, and though other lights and shadows must be reflected there in coming days, they can never obliterate the sweet images which grateful memory will jealously preserve. Tender remembrances will render indelible the pictures of the sick-chamber, which so many times had almost been the gate of heaven to our spirit; the little room tenderly fitted up by a husband's careful love, and so often the scene of a scarcely hoped-for convalescence; the study sacred to the Pastor's earnest work, and silent witness of wrestlings and communings known only to God and his own soul. In the room, by desire of the incoming tenants, has been placed the following inscription, written by Mr. Spurgeon:

"Farewell! fair room; I leave thee to a friend!
Peace dwell with him, and all his kin.
May angels evermore the house defend,
Their Lord hath often been within."

And perhaps it may not be inappropriate likewise to quote a tribute written by the husband to the wife, when absent from her, and when his heart yearned for the inspiration of her presence:

MARRIED LOVE.—TO MY WIFE.

"Over the space that parts us, my wife,
I'll cast me a bridge of song.
Our hearts shall meet, O joy of my life,
On its arch unseen, but strong.

"The wooer his new love's name may wear
Engraved on a precious stone;
But in my heart thine image I bear,
That heart has long been thine own.

"The glowing colors on surface laid,
Wash out in a shower of rain;
Thou need'st not be of rivers afraid
For my love is dyed ingrain,

"And as every drop of Garda's lake
Is tinged with sapphire's blue,
So all the powers of my mind partake
Of joy and the thought of you.

"The glittering dewdrops of dawning love
Exhale as the day grows old,
And fondness, taking the wings of a dove,
Is gone like a tale of old.

"But mine for thee, from the chambers of joy
With strength came forth as the sun,
Nor life nor death shall its force destroy,
For ever its course shall run.

"All earth-born love must sleep in the grave,
To its native dust return;
What God hath kindled shall death outbrave
And in heaven itself shall burn.

"Beyond and above the wedlock tie
Our union to Christ we feel,
Uniting bonds which were made on high
Shall hold us when earth shall reel.

"Though He who chose us all worlds before
Must *reign* in our hearts alone,
We fondly believe that we shall adore
Together before His throne."

The hope expressed by the husband in his tender verses in God's own time will be completely realized. He has already crossed the river, and his companion but waits the summons to join her dear one on the other shore. The strength of her attachment and the unselfishness of her devotion were vividly set forth in an article she wrote regarding her beloved's invalid condition, in which she describes her entrance into his study and how she fell upon her knees where he had so often knelt, and poured out her soul in earnest prayer for his recovery. So intense was her solicitude in those days that we can well understand how irreparable is her loss now, and how rent her soul must be by her supreme bereavement. But beyond this reflection let us not presume to go. The veil of grief enwraps the homestead, and ought not to be touched even by friendly hands; and prurient eyes should be cast down and not be turned toward that which is too sacred for curious contemplation. With uncov-

ered heads we pass the house that shall know no more the cheery presence of its master, and leave the weeping widow with her precious dead, waiting for the gladsome hour of which Christina Rossetti sweetly sings:

If now you saw me you would say:
Where is the face I used to love?
And I would answer: Gone before;
It tarries veiled in Paradise.
When once the morning stars shall rise,
When earth with shadows flees away
And we stand safe within the door,
Then you shall lift the veil thereof.
Look up, rise up: for far above
Our palms are grown, our place is set;
There we shall meet as once we met,
And love with old familiar love.

XII.

THE ailments from which Mr. Spurgeon suffered, assailed him at a comparatively early period in his career, and were a source of much physical pain and of frequent separation from his people. While the nature of the disease undoubtedly was such that human skill could not successfully contend against it, yet it has seemed to me that his death was hastened by the anxiety he felt for the future of Christ's cause and kingdom upon earth. I do not blame what is known as the "down grade" controversy for his premature dissolution; but I am of the opinion that the worry and even the apprehension growing out of that momentous contention tended to counteract the action of remedies, which otherwise might have pro-

longed his days. It is well known, that he took to heart and felt very keenly what he considered grave departures from sound doctrinal views on the part of some prominent religious teachers. He was himself thoroughly convinced of the correctness of his theological position, and being genuinely sincere in all that he thought and all that he did, he could not, with indifference, countenance what to him was a most dangerous deviation from the truth. To understand the intensity of his antagonism, one must always recall the intensity of his own convictions and the unwavering stability of his integrity. He could not sympathize with brethren who seemed intent on restless excursions for the lost piece of silver, when he realized that he had it in his own grasp. Nor could he tolerate anything that looked like a disposition to mold and mint one of larger seeming but of baser metal. He never doubted the genuineness of the coin he handled; and all others, however they might

bear on their face a similar effigy and superscription, and though pretentiously bigger in size, were to him only base and fallacious counterfeits. He discerned, what Dr. Döllinger had declared to be true, "that the festering wounds of unbelief were causing every communion in Christendom to languish," and he perceived that perils to the Church were inseparable from current mutinies against the doctrines which had hitherto been very generally accepted.

Some one has said, that the science of fortifications requires works of defence to be begun at a point remote from the citadel that may be placed by the fortunes of war in imminent jeopardy. These are the outworks that must be forced before the final assault can be attempted, and it is upon their strength that safety depends. The Puritan preacher was convinced that modern thought, as represented by certain scholarly leaders, was inimical to old-fashioned dogmas, that the outworks of

Christianity were being hazarded by rash, current questionings, and that if certain positions were surrendered, the very citadel itself would inevitably succumb. He was therefore unwilling to abandon any of the fortifications however far they might seem from the heart of the beleaguered city of God. If anything like objurgatory verbiage in the intensity of zeal passed from his lips, it must always be remembered that during the last years of his life, whether he confessed it or not, he felt deep down in his soul that he was the Elijah of his age, and that practically he was the lonely prophet of Horeb standing out against the priests of Baal in behalf of the precious teachings of Heaven. The painful impression was made upon my mind, when I last heard him pray and preach, that he was being borne down and crushed by the consciousness of an immeasurable responsibility growing out of nineteenth century liberalism.

Browning has written —

"Your so styled great men,
Do they accept one truth, as truth is found,
Or try their skill at tinkering?"

I shall leave the poet to answer his own inquiry; but there is no doubt that an enormous amount of tinkering has been undertaken of late, and that much of it has been of little practical value and has been very far from ornamental. I humbly think, however, that Mr. Spurgeon attached too much importance to present tendencies, and allowed himself to be unduly harassed by their assaults on what to him was true and eternal. It would have been better could he have realized at all times, what unquestionably when in sounder physical health he must have admitted, that over and above human devisings and plannings God reigns, and will guard His Church through the future as He has through the ages past. Some changes, some new statements of old doctrines, are inevitable; for not a few erroneous conceptions have settled like encrusted

dust, on the fair face of God's own revealed Word, and are being read there between the lines as though they were integral parts of the inspired message.

There is in Rome a famous ceiling, wrought by the hand of Michael Angelo, adorning the Sistine Chapel, which has suffered much from moisture and age, and unfortunately more from the hands of would-be renovators. It was observed some years ago that the wonderful painting was seriously obscured, and workmen were appointed to remove the stains from the surface, and to restore, if possible, the vividness of the original coloring. Unfortunately the laborers were not artists. They took huge sponges and went over the surface somewhat roughly; and as was discovered afterward, to facilitate their efforts, mixed an undue quantity of caustic with the water. The result was, that in a little while it was quite evident the picture was cracking and that several figures were permanently injured; and when last I was in Rome

earnest endeavors were being made, to arrest the ruin and preserve what remained for the benefit of posterity. In a similar sense, some crude historical interpretations of Christianity, preserved and transmitted in creed and dogma, have come in the popular mind to be identified with Holy Scriptures, as though they were inseparable from them, and these have darkened much that is true, fair and beautiful in the teachings of Jesus. Probably a little scouring would not prove amiss, or out of place. Wash off, if you will, an unnecessary and at least an untenable theory of verbal inspiration; remove carnal views of that deep spiritual mystery termed the Atonement; erase the black blotches resulting from gloomy thoughts of the Divine character and providence, and no harm will come to religion itself. Only let the workmen be wise enough to leave caustic out of their critical purgations. Instead of bunglers engaging in so delicate a task, or even competent but rash scholars like Dillman, Graf, Well-

hausen in Germany, and Robertson Smith and Cheyne in England, let judicious and discerning men render the needed service and no permanent injury will result from their labors.

Neither is there any reasonable ground of apprehension that Baptists will go too far in this direction, whether they live in England or America. Of the happy, conservative tendencies of the denomination in this country it is not necessary to speak; it is enough to know that they are entirely adequate to prevent any widespread and radical departure from the faith of our ancestors; and neither should we doubt our brethren of the mother country. They have numbered among them in the past many notable laymen and many sterling and godly ministers of the Word; and in our day, churches and associations in the old world are most sincerely devoted to the supremacy of God's truth. We may rest assured that little is gained by undue suspicion, and that everything is jeopardized by undue alarm. As there

were loyal prophets in the days of Elijah, so now there are thousands upon thousands of aggressive and progressive scholarly men who have not bowed the knee to the sun-god, and who have not turned their backs on the altar of Jehovah. The world has never been left without witnesses and never will be; and should human tongues fall dumb, we have the Divine assurance that in some way the very stones themselves shall cry out. This conviction is beautifully illustrated by some lines in Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered.* They are those which relate to the squadron of "Immortals"; thus named, because whenever a knight fell in the battle his place was immediately filled and it was hardly known that he was gone:

> "Immortal called is that band of light
> For of that number never wanteth one,
> But in his empty place some other knight
> Steps in when any man is dead or gone."

This, however, is not the only army in

which brave hearts are ever found to fill the ranks that have been decimated by the grim Destroyer. Even now the youth is being trained who shall take up the high and holy task of adjusting whatever is true in new theology to what is of permanent authority in the old revelation; and who shall show how unnecessary were all our fears, and how well He who gave the Bible knew how to guard it through these days of daring scholarship as through those dark mediæval ages when it seemed to have perished from neglect. And somewhere, too, perhaps at this very hour, in some unnoticed Kelvedon, a child looks wistfully into a Puritan mother's face and hangs on her words, who is destined by providence to take up the work the master-soul has just laid down. Robert Hall died on the year that Spurgeon saw the light; and perhaps in compassion to His Church the All-Father has already sent the little babe who shall, in coming years, lift up the standard high and

lead gloriously onward the hosts of God to victory.

It seemed to me, in meditating on our brother's death, that the joy of Heaven must have been first imparted to his soul, with the sudden perfect and unclouded consciousness that Jesus Christ keeps watch and ward over His Church on earth.

What a blissful moment that must have been when, emancipated from all forebodings, and when standing in the light of the eternal city he could lay at the feet of the exalted Christ the burden of responsibility that had nearly crushed him, knowing as he never had known before, that the Christ would contrive to bear it as He had really borne it through all the centuries. During last year's *Salon* a picture was exhibited by Mr. H. Glazebrook, that has caught the popular taste, entitled: "*C' est l' Empereur*". It has been copied and may be seen in the art stores of our cities. The conception is striking, the execution admirable

It simply represents a sentry, who, having fallen asleep in a field of grain, has been startled into wakefulness by some undefined cause to find the emperor, Napoleon I, standing guard in his place. There is an expression of mingled surprise and fear, and yet not unmixed with satisfaction, on the soldier's face as, with hand uplifted, he exclaims, "It is the Emperor!" May we not portray to our minds another and even more impressive wakening. Suffering in his room at Mentone, thinking of the manifold needs of this sin-darkened world and of the enemies assailing truth and righteousness, the warrior who had done such valiant service may have been distressed as he sadly realized that he could do no more. But oh, what joy when, having succumbed to the drowsiness of death, his eyes opened on the unseen universe, he not only beheld his Saviour greeting him with smiles and blessings, but on turning, once more, his glance toward earth, descried that divine, majestic Form still guarding Church

and people. What a triumphant cry must have burst from lips, whose eloquence shall no more sound among the children of men, as he exclaimed, "It is the Lord, yea, the King of Kings, and all is well!"

XIII.

WHILE it would be premature to estimate the total worth of Mr. Spurgeon's character and work to the age in which he lived, one thing, I presume, will be conceded from what is familiarly known of his career; it is, that the nineteenth century has had a place, and a large place, for this pastor and teacher, and has not been altogether indifferent to his message. He has vindicated anew the greatness and dignity of an office which has too frequently, in the minds of superficial multitudes, been associated with what is meagre and narrow. It seems easy to overlook what the preacher has been to the world. The achievements of the soldier, the statesman and the merchant usurp the atten-

tion of the ordinary public, and it does not readily appreciate the brilliant services rendered by another order of benefactors. And yet, according to Renan, the very shadow of Paul, falling on the Roman empire, was a blessing.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that it was a preacher, Athanasius, who stood immovable against a flood of errors that otherwise would have submerged the primitive faith, and who cried out in heroic defiance, "*Athanasius contra mundi*". It was a preacher, Telemachus, who at the cost of his life interposed to rescue Christian Rome from the brutalities of the amphitheatre; it was a preacher, Savonarola, who dared refuse to the Medician tyrant Lorenzo the consolations of religion, unless he would restore to fallen Florence her liberties; it was a preacher, Luther, who, serenely stubborn, would not yield though it might rain devils converted out of the tiles of Worms, and who brought the dark ages to an end by such a revolution as rendered the modern era a glo-

rious possibility. Likewise it was a preacher, John Knox, who feared not the face of clay, and who shaped out of the rude barbarous Scotch, a character perhaps the most stalwart and striking of modern times; it was a preacher, Leonard Busher, who openly proclaimed in the presence of priests and of earthly potentates that God had made free the soul — free to think and free to worship; it was a preacher, John Robinson of Leyden, who looked to the new world as the home of liberty and faith, and sent forth the Pilgrims on their memorable voyage; it was a preacher, David Livingstone, who did more than any other man to draw the heart of Christendom to darkest Africa, and to inspire efforts for its temporal and spiritual welfare; and it was a preacher — but, "time would fail to tell of those who founded cities, established schools, befriended weakness, waxed valiant in fight, put to flight the army of the alien, and of whom the world was not worthy." And Mr. Spurgeon,

by the unrivalled loftiness of his thought, the eminence and purity of his character, the depth and breadth of his evangelical spirit; by his loyalty to human needs, by his sympathy for the poor and wretched, has called once more the attention of society to this illustrious order of men, and has shown that even the nineteenth century cannot dispense with the consecrated endeavors and spiritual leadership of the Christian ministry. However bad our times may be, however materialized by prosperity, and rendered skeptical by heartless philosophies, the nineteenth century has yet an open ear to the man who has a message to deliver, and a place in its reverence and love for the man or woman who has a Christ-like mission to accomplish.

But it must be convinced that he who talks is not the prophet of a class or *clique*, but of the race as a whole. His speech must not be a dialect or a fashionable *patois*, but a universal language comprehensible by all nations. A

very select audience usually denotes a one-sided teacher whose tongue has been taught in the phrases of a polite guild, and whose influence is necessarily determined by his own personal limitations. The preacher, of whom I have written in these pages, gave evidence very early in his ministry of a cosmopolitan spirit. Writing to a Chelmsford newspaper as long ago as April 24, 1855, he anticipates the character of his future career by discovering to the public the breadth and the tenderness of his nature.

He says: "I am usually careless of the notices of papers concerning myself — referring all honor to my Master, and believing that dishonorable articles are but advertisements for me, and bring more under the sound of the Gospel. But you, my dear sir (I know not why), have been pleased so favorably to speak of my labors that I think it only right that I should thank you. Amid a constant din of abuse, it is pleasant to poor flesh and blood

to hear *one* favorable voice. I am far from deserving much that you have said in my praise, but as I am equally undeserving of the coarse censure poured on me by the *Standard*, etc., I will set the one against the other. I am neither eloquent nor learned, but the Head of the Church has given me sympathy with the masses, love to the poor, and the means of winning the attention of the ignorant and unenlightened. I never sought popularity, and I cannot tell how it is so many come, but shall I now change? To please the polite critic shall I leave '*the people*', who so much require a simple and stirring style? I am, perhaps, vulgar, and so on, but it is not intentional, save that I *must* and *will* make the people listen. My firm conviction is that we have quite enough *polite* preachers, and that 'the many' require a change. God has owned me among the most degraded and off-cast, let others serve their class; these are mine, and to them I must keep."

The servants of Christ are set apart to reach the world, and where they have the necessary qualifications of head and heart for the work they will not lack for hearers. There is perhaps no graver delusion than that which supposes the ability of a preacher to be exceptionally large when his congregation is exceptionally small; and there is no specimen of society Pharisaism more offensively arrogant than that which assumes the intelligence of religious assemblies to be in the inverse ratio to their size. And yet, though men like Henry Ward Beecher and Canon Liddon and Henry Melville addressed their thousands, there is an affectation in some showy circles that the fewer the number the greater the evidence of culture both in the pulpit and pew. It is enough for us to say that there is no ground for this silly prejudice. There are many highly educated and estimable clergymen who undoubtedly are entitled to a more generous hearing than they receive; but they ought not

to speak of their sparsely filled church as creditable, when in proportion to their gifts and culture it must be a public misfortune. The worthier they are of attention the more completely will they realize that sanctified ambition ought to aspire to touch the common heart of mankind, and to move the universal life of man toward the infinite life of God. It is such an ideal as this, however faultily it may be wrought out in individual cases, that redeems the Christian ministry from semi-bondage to social distinctions and lying vanities. The author of *Twenty-five Years of St. Andrews* quotes a bishop as saying to a successful dissenter: "Your Church is outside of criticism; it brings a great number of people within hearing of the Gospel." While I am not quite sure of such churches escaping criticism, I am certain that they are doing a work dear to the Saviour's heart, and that exalts religion in the eyes of a century even as censorious and captious as our own.

The people's preacher has furthur helped the pulpit of our age, and gained for it an increase of respectful attention, by the example he has presented of the thorough-going honesty which is generally its distinguishing characteristic. There has been at times a grave suspicion in the public mind that expounders of creeds and symbols do not speak out all they believe, and that they are able by Jesuitical arts to justify this silence at the bar of their own conscience. Much has been said in conversation and in literature on the subject of priestcraft, and it has been more than feared that it has not failed to make some inroads into Protestantism. Such an impression is a calamity. Wherever it obtains, confidence in the Church is seriously and almost irretrievably impaired. How shall we dare to trust her, when the voice is Jacobs and the hands are the hands of Esau? If her teachers are double-tongued, and if they equivocate, as though they prized their position more than their manliness, then Ichabod may be

inscribed on her dishonored altars. The Tabernacle pastor expressed himself very early in his career on this subject, and as usual in terms not capable of misconstruction. During the outburst of ecclesiastical fury that greeted his sermons on Baptismal Regeneration, 1864, with startling distinctness he condemned clergymen who were alleged to have subscribed to a doctrine they did not believe. In fiery indignation he cried out:

"I am told that many in the Church of England preach against her own teaching. I know they do, and herein I rejoice in their enlightenment, but I question, gravely question, their morality. To take oath that I sincerely assent and consent to a doctrine which I do not believe, would to my conscience appear little short of perjury, if not absolute downright perjury; but those who do so must be judged by their own Lord. For me to take money for defending what I do not believe — for me to take the money of a church and then to preach

against what are most evidently its doctrines — I say *for me* to do this (I judge others as I would that they should judge me) — for me, or for any other simple, honest man to do so, were an atrocity so great, that if I had perpetrated the deed, I should consider myself out of the pale of truthfulness, honesty and common morality. Sirs, when I accepted the office of minister of this congregation, I looked to see what were your articles of faith; if I had not believed them I should not have accepted your call, and when I change my opinions, rest assured that as an honest man I shall resign the office, for how could I profess one thing in your declaration of faith and quite another thing in my own preaching? Would I accept your pay, and then stand up every Sabbath-day and talk against the doctrines of your standards? For clergymen to swear or say that they give their solemn assent and consent to what they do not believe is one of the grossest peices of immorality perpetrated in

England, and is most pestilential in its influence, since it directly teaches men to lie wherever it seems necessary to do so in order to get a living or increase their supposed usefulness; it is, in fact, an open testimony from priestly lips that at least in ecclesiastical matters falsehood may express truth, and truth itself is a mere unimportant nonentity."

This blast had a happy effect. It purified the Theological atmosphere. The unflinching and unrelenting zeal of the young prophet brought on him the unmeasured abuse of the sacramentarian party. But in his turn he was as defiant as Wyclif, as courageous as Hugh Latimer, and as uncompromising as Luther. When it was contemptuously said that he was young, and disclosed presumptuous self-confidence in pronouncing judgment on matters of which he was ignorant, he continued his side of the conflict in the following energetic style:

"We want John Knox back again. Do not talk to me of mild and gentle men, of soft man-

ners and squeamish words; we want the fiery Knox, and even though his vehemence should 'ding our pulpits into blads', it were well if he did but rouse our hearts to action. We want Luther to tell men the truth unmistakably, in homely phrase. The velvet has got into our ministers' mouths of late, but we must unrobe ourselfs of soft raiment, and truth must be spoken, and nothing but truth; for of all lies which have dragged millions down to hell, I look upon this as being one of the most atrocious — that in a Protestant Church there should be found those who swear that baptism saves the soul. Call a man a Baptist, or a Presbyterian, or a Dissenter, or a Churchman, that is nothing to me — if he says that baptism saves the soul, out upon him, out upon him; he states what God never taught, what the Bible never laid down, and what ought never to be maintained by men who profess that the Bible and the whole Bible is the religion of Protestants."

When this storm had subsided, while Mr. Spurgeon had made not a few foes, it was realized that the protest against clerical timidity and insincerity had accomplished much good. The public sided with him at least thus far, in approving his scorn of men who esteemed their salary more highly than their consistency. Henceforward the masses, who had had their attention called to a possible fault in their religious instructors, would be on the alert to detect dishonesty, and would not be likely to deal with it tolerantly. Likewise this furious controversy led to greater fearlessness on the part of God's ambassadors. If they must speak out, then they certainly will speak out. They will not be suspected of concealing their opinions or smothering convictions. As a result there has been more plain talking, more manly avowal of dissent from untenable theories, and more transparency of doctrine of late than there was at the beginning of the present century. The change is wholesome and pro-

phetic of good. It has, in my judgment, increased the world's respect for a teaching Church, and will give to her a position of influence in the coming years.

And in the future, unless I sadly miscalculate the force of a life that has now passed into history, the grand ideal of the minister's vocation and function as set forth in some suggestive sentences from the pen of John Ruskin, will come to rule in society and will elevate the tone and increase the power of the pulpit throughout the world:

"But if we once begin to regard the preacher, whatever his faults, as a man sent with a message to us, which it is a matter of life or death whether we hear or refuse; if we look upon him as set in charge over many spirits in danger of ruin, and, having allowed to him but an hour or two in the seven days to speak to them; if we make some endeavor to conceive how precious these hours ought to be to him, a small vantage on the side of God after his

flock have been exposed six days together to the full weight of the world's temptation, and he has been forced to watch the thorn and the thistle springing in their hearts, and to see what wheat had been scattered there snatched from the wayside by this wild bird and the other; and at last, when breathless and weary with the week's labor, they give him this interval of imperfect and languid hearing, he has but thirty minutes to get at the separate hearts of a thousand men, to convince them of all their weaknesses, to shame them for all their sins, to warn them of all their dangers, to try by this way and that to stir the hard fastenings of those doors where the Master Himself has stood and knocked, but none opened, and to call at the openings of those dark streets where Wisdom herself has stretched forth her hands and no man regarded — thirty minutes to raise the dead in; let us but once understand and feel this, and we shall look with changed eyes upon that frippery of gay

furniture about the place from which the message of judgment must be delivered, which either breathes upon the dry bones that they may live, or, if ineffectual, remains recorded in condemnation, perhaps against the utterer and listener alike, but assuredly against one of them. We shall not so easily beat with the silver and gold upon the seat of judgment, nor with ornament of oratory in the mouth of the messenger; we shall wish that his words may be simple, even when they are sweetest, and the place from which he speaks like a marble rock in the desert, about which the people have gathered in their thirst."

XIV.

WHEN Christianity was planted in the Roman Empire, its environments were certainly hostile to its continuance. It found itself in a world out of harmony with its fundamental conceptions and its essential aspirations. A stranger was it in uncongenial company, a fair exotic in a barren and stubborn soil. It either had to adjust itself to its surroundings, or to adjust surroundings to itself. The latter course it pursued with an inflexibility born of conscientious conviction. But we are not to suppose that it escaped entirely the influence of Pagan civilization. Classical literature, to say nothing of forms of government, could hardly fail to leave its mark on the new Faith. This effect seems

to have been dreaded by Tertullian, Irenæus, Tatian, Hermias, and by others of the Fathers, both East and West. Their warnings, however, appear to have availed little; for Clement of Alexandria was so fascinated by Greek philosophy as to contend that it contained the elements of that "perfect knowledge, which is beyond this world"; and Augustine attributes his first serious impressions to the *Hortensius* of Cicero. Concerning this book he writes: "It changed my affections, and turned my prayers to Thyself, O Lord, and made me have other hopes and desires." Extensive quotations from ancient classics occur in the works of Cyprian, Origen, Eusebius, Justin Martyr, Gregory Nazianzen, Minucius Felix, and hosts of other Christian teachers; and what is even of more significance, when Julian ascended the imperial throne (A. D. 361), he tried to prevent such teachers from lecturing on the great heathen authors, sarcastically intimating that it was hardly consistent for

one to expound Homer who derided Homer's gods. But the early Church evidently was not willing to be deprived of its rights in the triumphs of human genius. It appropriated much of the wisdom that had gradually accumulated through the ages. Nevertheless, it never lost sight of its mission, and persistently though slowly, in the face of persecutions and the irruptions of barbarians, subdued the old forms of life, and assimilated the thought and habits of community to its own dominant ideas and ambitions. It unquestionably succeeded in changing its environments, and produced the Middle Ages. A process of naturalization or of de-naturalization had gone on, with Mediæval society as a result. For several centuries it appeared as though the harmony was correct in principle, and in the main satisfactory, though of course, not perfect in details. Then came a painful discovery.

The discovery was nothing less than the realization that the encompassment of Christianity,

the civilization which it had done so much to create and which was governed by its doctrinal concepts, was unfavorable if not disastrous to the growth and expansion of its genuine spirit. Instead of freedom there was bondage, instead of purity corruption, and instead of the light of God's Word lightening every man that came into the world there was merely a phosphorescent gleam from the tiara of an enthroned caricature of the Christ. How these convictions gradually came to serious souls I need not rehearse. We are interested only in the fact, and in what the fact developed. Conscious of the evils that threatened to exterminate religion, part of the Church broke away from the other part, and broke likewise with much that had been sanctioned by the past and that had become intrenched in the social customs and manners of the people. This disruption is known in history as the Reformation; and the very soul and strength of the Reformation is Puritanism.

What this great word denotes is not always understood or appreciated. It antedates historic Protestantism; for we find it in the name "Cathari" applied to certain Christains of the third century; and while it first begins to appear in English literature about the year 1565, the essence of what it really stands for was professed by the Lollards in the days of Wyclif and John of Gaunt (1324–1384).

These people believed in the supremacy of the Bible and in its translation. They also believed in its general circulation and in lay-preaching, that its glorious teachings might not be hid from the commonality. And they opposed excessive ceremonialism, and all rites not enjoined by Scripture; and they denounced the usurpation of bishops and the use of set forms of prayer. As the Church of England after its separation from the Papacy did not correct the evils complained of, Christians who sympathized with the Lollards, and who, within the Established Communion and beyond,

demanded further and more radical reform, came to be called Puritans. The title — a term of reproach when employed in 1565 — was not originally associated with doctrinal views divergent from those held by the Episcopacy; for Fuller, a reliable chronicler, says, "We must not forget that Spalato was the first who, professing himself a Protestant, used the name Puritan to signify the defenders of matters doctrinal in the English Church." This Prelate visited England in the year 1616, a year ever memorable, for it was marked by two momentous events, the death of Shakespeare, and the entrance of Oliver Cromwell as a fellow-commoner at the University of Cambridge. And from that date may be traced the ever widening breach between churchmen and Puritans in thought and in practise, resulting in civil war, and, after its vicissitudes, in the permanent formation of two religious camps.

The dissidents from the Establishment up to the time of the Restoration were not opposed

to the union of Church and State, and were indeed committed to theories of a Theocratical government for the nation; and hence a document signed by eighty-four of their ministers declared that "toleration is a toleration of soul murder, the greatest murder of all". This sad feature of their ecclesiastical polity explains much in the early annals of New England, which need not here be discussed.

But fortunately for the world and for religion a change occurred, gradually it is true, yet quite completely, in their views on this subject. This transition is doubtless to be traced to the influence of certain opinions that had almost imperceptibly been forcing themselves on the public mind. Robert Brown, born in 1550, about the year 1580 began to proclaim "that the Kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, be they ever so few". He likewise taught that "a Church is a company or number of Christians or believers, who by a willing

covenant made with their God, are under the government of God and of Christ, and keep his law in one holy communion". This conception, approved by the Baptists, was by that people embodied substantially in their London Confession of Faith, 1611; and was rendered more emphatic and consistent by their championship of religious liberty. In the Confession of 1611 occur these golden words: "We believe that the magistrate is not to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, nor compel men to this or that form of religion, because Christ is King and law-giver of the Church and conscience." These are the sentiments that began to influence the entire body of English dissenters, when their political hopes were crushed by the return of the king 1660, and that sank deep into their souls by the passage of the Uniformity Act, 1662, which ejected 2,000 of their ministers from their parishes. This cruel Act gave rise to a new name, Nonconformists, which came to supersede the older

one, Puritans; and with the passage of the Toleration Bill, 1689, they who bore it in England very generally adopted the principle of soul freedom. An immense gain this to Christianity, and one that would qualify it to meet emergencies, undreamt of in the seventeenth century.

It will be seen by this *résume*, that Puritanism is the genius of Nonconformity; and that refined from the crudities and misapprehensions of the past, it stands in modern times for the supremacy of God's Word, the supremacy of conscience in its interpretation, the supremacy of the spiritual in the human, the supremacy of the Holy Ghost in the Church, and the supremacy, or if the terms are preferable, the independence and sovereignty, of the Church in the State as a spiritual force and teacher. This is what Puritanism was essentially at the beginning of its history in Great Britain; only then it too narrowly identified a certain doctrinal statement with Bible revela-

tion, and failed to emancipate itself from the notion that the Church ought to be in some formal and organic way the head of the temporal power, or be vitally associated with its exercise. Freed from these errors and defects, which were, after all, only adventitious and not intrinsical to the system, Puritanism contemplated, not without reasons for apprehension, the early years of the nineteenth century.

This, the latest of the centuries, was preceded by tumults and upheavals in the old world and in the new. It was, in a sense, born of the revolutionary throes that had convulsed two continents. The war of Independence in America and the overthrow of the Bourbons in Europe, announced to mankind an inevitable political future differing most radically from state-craft in the past. Years might elapse before the promises enunciated in the musket shots of Lexington and Concord and the deep-throated defiance of the guns that bombarded the walls of the Bastile were realized, but

their ultimate fulfillment could not be arrested. The march of democracy was bound to be triumphant. Consequently the year 1800 found the people of various lands with a dawning consciousness of their own significance, and moodily disposed to dispute the authority of venerated and venerable institutions. The spirit of the times asserted itself in violent and vulgar forms of infidelity, and in restless and almost unmeasured agitations on all sorts of subjects related to the public weal, which on the continent reached a kind of climax in 1838–1842, when kings were the special object of popular animosity, and in England when Chartism reared its banner and shook the island with its processionings and riots. With the rise and enlargement of the "Third Estate" came other innovations of the most striking character. Newspapers grew in importance and acquired a power that has steadily increased, and that has influenced millions of readers to think for themselves. The Press

also had much to do in creating the modern enthusiasm for general education; and this movement, too, so far as its extension and thoroughness and improvement of methods are concerned, belongs to this century.

Science likewise has made rapid strides during the last hundred years. The Hershels, the Lamarcks, the Darwins, and others too numerous to name, have introduced the race into a universe unknown to the fathers. Astronomy has been made to tell a new story as to the origin of the earth; Geology, heretofore a stranger, has unfolded its physical history; and Evolution, another fresh claimant to attention, has described the method by which all things have come to be, including man himself. More than this, cheap postage, improved locomotion, telegraphic communication, social sanitation, have all tended to draw men of various ranks and nationalities together, and to so increase the emphasis on the importance of the individual as to render it necessary for every cause

demanding of him a hearing to present its credentials and make good its assumptions at the bar of his understanding. Nor have religious teachers been absent from this reconstructing of the human world.

In the eighteenth century Eichhorn and Paulus advocated a rationalistic and destructive type of Christianity, that acquired the title of "Neology"; and early in the present century "The Tübingen School", founded by Baur, also called "The Historical School", stimulated if it did not originate the higher criticism, which occasions so much consternation among timid people of our day, and which has carried its principles to such extremes that Dr. Stanley Leathes has been led to exclaim with Laurence Sterne, "Grant me patience, just Heaven! Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world, though the cant of hypocrites may be the worst, the cant of criticism is the most tormenting."

However legitimate investigations of this

kind may be, and however desirable in the long run their results may prove, let us not be blind to the fact that they indicate a change in the public mind relative to authority in historic religion. No longer can Churches compel belief in themselves or in the Bible by the vigor and vehemence of their assertions, and neither can they prevent inquiry into the validity of their claims by any species of indignant and vituperative piety. The nature of the transformation that has been taking place during this century is graphically illustrated in an interview published in *The Review of Reviews* between Mrs. Besant and Dr. Pusey. Before the Secularist period in Mrs. Besant's career, and, of course, prior to her recent conversion to Theosophy, she was in great trouble of mind on matters of faith. In her spiritual perplexity she sought counsel from this eminent churchman. How he dealt with her case may be gathered from the following extracts; and her manner of reply will, I am

sure, show how utterly foreign to the spirit of the age is the ecclesiastical imperialism of former times. These sentences are as instructive as they are vivid:

"'It is not your duty to ascertain the truth,' he told me sternly. 'It is your duty to accept and believe the truth as laid down *by the Church;* at your peril you reject it; the responsibility is not yours so long as you dutifully accept what the Church has laid down for your acceptance. Did not the Lord promise that the presence of the Spirit should be ever with His Church, to guide her into all truth?'

"'But the fact of the promise and its value are the very points on which I am doubtful,' I answered.

"He shuddered. 'Pray, pray,' he said; 'Father, forgive her, for she knows not what she says.'

"It was in vain I urged I had everything to gain and nothing to lose by following his directions, but that it seemed to me that fidelity to

truth forbade a pretended acceptance of that which was not believed.

"'Everything to lose? Yes, indeed. You will be lost for time and lost for eternity.'

"'Lost or not,' I rejoined, 'I must and will find out what is true, and I will not believe until *I am sure*.'

"'You have no right to make terms with God,' he answered, 'as to what you will believe and what you will not believe. You are full of intellectual pride.'

"I sighed hopelessly. Little feeling of pride was there in me just then, and I felt that in this rigid, unyielding dogmatism there was no comprehension of my difficulties, no help for my strugglings. I rose, and thanking him for his courtesy, said that I would not waste his time further, that I must go home and just face the difficulties out, openly leaving the Church and taking the consequences. Then for the first time his serenity was ruffled.

"'I forbid you to speak of your disbelief,' he

cried: 'I forbid you to lead into your own lost state the souls for whom Christ died.'

"Slowly and sadly I took my way back to the railway station, knowing that my last chance of escape had failed me."

Now, how could Puritanism hope to adapt itself to this new era? how adjust itself to the demands of its modern environments? It found itself in a world apparently as foreign to it as the Roman empire was to primitive Christianity; and as impossible for it not to feel the influence of the existing age, as it was for the Fathers of the Church not to be affected in some degree by the philosophy of Plato and by the culture of classical authors. Scientific discoveries, hypotheses springing therefrom, the spirit of independent inquiry, social unrest, historical criticism, and the larger, fuller and freer life of the times, could hardly fail to modify religion. That it has been modified in non-essential and superficial things no one, I presume, will deny. But what is equally true and far

more significant, it has not only successfully resisted the iconoclastic encroachments of civilization, but has been able in several respects to bring the new civilization into sympathy with its own aims and endeavors. Whatever has been accomplished in this direction has been in the main the achievement of the last forty years. During the first half of the century there were preliminary struggles, such as the evangelical upheaval in Scotland and the quickening in Germany under the Haldanes, but the real work has been successfully performed during a very recent period.

The way by which Puritanism has maintained itself and acquired influence in modern society, and has been able to compel respectful recognition and to endear itself to multitudes, is entitled to thoughtful consideration. This impressive phenomenon I am persauded is due in no small degree to the heightening of the contrast between its spirituality and the materialistic drift of the age. Whether designed or

not, or whether, as is more credible, the effect of a Divine cause, there can hardly be any doubt but that the soul of religion has been more fully disclosed in these later years than the body, and certainly far more than the attire or the outward adornments. Even where antique forms of doctrinal statement have been preferred, as in the case of Mr. Spurgeon or Canon Liddon, they have been irradiated by a transforming glow of spirit that has softened their sharpness and deepened their significance. Literalists of the most pronounced type have not been able entirely to resist the tendency of Christian thought and life from surface distinctions toward the very heart and essence of things. Venerable creeds have excited measurable repugnance, not, however, because of their absolute erroneousness, but because of their inadequacy to hold the fuller conceptions of the times. The old bottles cannot contain the new wine; but the inability is occasioned rather by the abundance

of the wine than by the weakness of the bottles. Let the undeniably orthodox sermons of Alexander Maclaren be read and compared with the orthodox sermons of Gill, and the characteristic on which I lay stress will be apparent to all who feel any interest whatever in the subject. But not merely in the direction of interpretation and preaching has the remarkable advance of the Church along spiritual lines been made manifest. In the decline of sacramentarian views of the ordinances, and in the ever diminishing regard for denominational distinctions it has also been displayed. Wherever Puritanism prevails a new heart is now esteemed more highly than water baptism, and common victory more than party success. Moreover, as a rule, where it is dominant, the teaching function is no longer conditioned by ordination, it being generally credited that God may find messengers, like Dwight Moody, on whom so-called "holy hands" have never been laid. Even it is being acknowledged that the

Almighty has not ceased to have communications with His creatures. It has come to be well-nigh unbelievable that He who revealed Himself in so many articulate ways in the past, should all at once and forever have become silent. Religious thought of course maintains that no Divine disclosures to the soul can be contradictory of what is revealed in Nature and the Bible; and indeed contends that permanent and general revelations are designed to serve as tests of those that are exceptional and individual. Advanced truth does not invalidate preliminary truth, but supplements and completes it. Grammar does not reject the Alphabet, and Algebra has no quarrel with Arithmetic. Inner illumination does not discard the Scriptures, nor ignore their teachings, but judges itself by them, and realizes that it cannot be out of harmony with them. The result of these ideas regarding God's continued intimacy with humanity is, that the soul's ear is now more open toward heaven than in the

past, and the belief is more common than heretofore that He has lessons for the race in all the vicissitudes of history. As the poet sings:

"God is not dumb, that He should speak no more;
If thou hast wanderings in the wilderness,
And findest not Sinai, 'tis thy soul is poor;
There towers the mountain of the Voice no less,
Which whoso seeks shall find, but he who bends,
Intent on manna still and mortal ends,
Sees it not, neither hears its thundered lore.

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the prophet's feet the nations sit."

This profound spirituality is at once the condemnation and the hope of our too materialistic century. It not only rebukes the sordidness of the age and exposes the harshness and emptiness of secularism, but it attracts by sheer

force of contrast to its higher and sweeter joys. Thoughtful men feel that this barrier between them and utter soullessness and absolute bondage to the flesh cannot with safety be despised; and millions who have no expectations from the march of progress, with its "iron and blood", instinctively turn to the spiritual with the intensity born of despair. The necessities and perils of our brilliant civilization have cleared the way and made a place for Puritanism, and the development of the spiritual fullness of Puritanism has increased indefinitely its influence over civilization.

But more than this: it has taken fresh root in the new soil because it has been able without compromise to adapt itself to changed conditions, and even to convert these conditions into the means of its own nourishment and growth. It is one of the distinctive glories of Puritanism that it has always been in touch with the people, that is, with the great bulk of a nation. While the supercilious rich may

have despised it, and the dregs of the population may have derided it, the rank and file of the intelligent and conscientious commonality have been its ardent supporters. They have appreciated the fact that it has ever been ready to champion their cause, and has been nobly loyal to the welfare of humanity. The evidence of this devotion is written large in England's history, and in the victorious struggle of the American Colonies. Therefore, in a democratic age what faith ought to be more at home than that of the Puritans, and what organization be better able to adapt itself to the ambitions of the public? To me it seems to be fully equal to the strain. Education is the popular demand, and evangelical churches are answering with schools of every grade; and when it is more than intimated that by this policy they undermine their own authority they keep on just the same enlightening the world, convinced that they have everything to gain from truth and everything to lose from

error; and this sublime confidence at once tends to disarm antagonism and to compel respectful attention. Moreover, these churches have entered sympathetically and are entering more and more into the feelings of the masses, are seeking to comprehend their discontent, and are sincerely anxious to promote their welfare. They are not blind to the evils that afflict society and that are crushing helpless women and children as well as unfortunate men. Their eyes are open, and their leaders have already spoken manly words on behalf of the wronged; and have exposed themselves to censure and cruel criticism, because in the face of oppressive greed they have maintained that wage-earners are not machines and ought to be dealt with as souls. It is being realized as never before by the Church of Christ that the race is one, that its interests are identical, and that consequently the fallen and degraded cannot be left to themselves, as they must by the law of solidarity draw others down to their

level. Mr. Spurgeon in 1881 called attention to this solidarity in the following paragraph:

"The true welfare of a country is not that of a class, but of the whole body corporate. The rich cannot prosper without the poor, nor the poor apart from the rich. The workman suffers if the master is impoverished, the employer is a loser if the artisan declines. Socially we are one body, and a sickly member is an injury to the whole. Drunkenness in one class is damage to us all; a want of thrift causes loss to the whole community; vice anywhere prepares contagion for all ranks; abominable laws oppressing a few are a real injury to the many. As in a sea-dyke every single rat is an enemy to every Dutchman, so every wrong in this kingdom wounds us all more or less. It were well that all good men felt this, and bestirred themselves. To benefit the community we must seek the good of every individual man, woman and child; and for a nation to do well each individual must work righteousness."

It is, I think, not too much to say that these sentiments are common to Puritanism to-day. Believing in the oneness of the human family, the disciples of our Lord are busy in reforms, and in philanthropic efforts of the largest scope. The work being done in London by Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, by Rev. Archibald G. Brown, and by Mr. Quintin Hogg, who founded and now carries on the famous Polytechnic on Regent Street, is typical of much that is being undertaken in other leading cities of England and America. The Robert Elsmeres of real life appear in the main to profess evangelical views; and whatever may be said to the contrary, they are manifestly bringing religion to the heart of the masses and are, not without success, teaching them to associate its influences with the ordinary affairs of daily life. The special feature of our times, so far as Christian endeavor is concerned, is the evident tendency of the spiritual to insphere itself in the secular. It is not as intent as formerly to

express itself in ritual and florid ceremony, or in the observance of sacred days and seasons; but in the commonplace pursuits and monotonous and even trivial engagements of each fleeting hour. There is no department of the busy world that it does not seek to enter, to beautify and sanctify. It aims to realize itself and fulfill its function in commerce, in trade, in industry, in politics and in literature, and to do the same in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness and in all the varying conditions of poor humanity. The spiritual is now striving to be incarnate in society as well as in the Church, and to place the imprint of Christ's ownership on its wealth, its gifts and its enterprises. And in proportion as this end is secured will organized greed be rebuked, depreciation in moral values be arrested, deadly feuds between capital and labor be composed, and the deliverance of the race from semi-savagery and sickening squalor be secured. Multitudes who are not Christains perceive

this, though it may be dimly. They see how desperately religion is struggling to rescue society, how self-sacrificingly, like its Founder, it leaves splendid sanctuary and solemn state, and comes down to the people and becomes one of the people, that the people may be saved; and seeing, they respect and admire, even though they may not believe.

It is by such means as these that Puritanism has made for itself a home in the nineteenth century, and has gained in no small degree the confidence and veneration of the century. In all directions the impression seems to grow and prevail, that while nations may safely dispense with gorgeous sacerdotalism and extravagant ecclesiastical establishments, religion — the religion that transforms and exalts the humblest occupation and that thrills the lowliest minds with inspiring visions of a better future — cannot be permitted to decline without entailing moral devastation and social disasters. The latest testimony to its indis-

pensableness, and perhaps the most eloquently conclusive, as it is from the pen of one who is himself an agnostic, indicates with what fierce energy society clings to a faith whose supernaturalism it affects to discredit. Hear Renan, and the hold that Puritanism has on the age will be less difficult to understand:

"That which we call infinite time is perhaps a minute between two miracles. 'We do not know.' That is all we can say about that which is beyond the Finite. Let us deny nothing. Let us affirm nothing. But let us hope. Let us keep a place in the funeral for the music and for the incense. An immense moral and perhaps intellectual abasement will follow the day when religion shall disappear from the world. We cannot do without a religion because others have one for us. They who do not believe are carried along by the mass of the more or less believing; but the day when the mass shall no longer have that glow of belief, then even the brave will go

timidly to battle. You will get much less from a humanity which does not believe in the immortality of the soul than from one which does believe. A man is of worth in proportion to the religious sentiments that he carries with him from his early education and which perfume all his life."

In my judgment Charles Haddon Spurgeon had much to do in advancing Puritanism to its present place and power. I say much, not everything; and very likely only a very small part of what he accomplished had this direct end in view. For men often work better than they know and follow a broader pattern than they imagine, and the result is proportionately beyond their expectation. The Reformation is not to be attributed to Luther alone; for Erasmus, Melancthon, and even dreamy Carlstadt and flighty Münzer bore their parts and contributed to the totality of the movement. One figure is more heroically conspicious than the others, but all were necessary to success.

It was so in the sixteenth century and it has been so in the nineteenth. There have been many remarkable preachers, who, though not the peers of the Tabernacle pastor, have coöperated with him, consciously or unconsciously, in bringing about the striking changes I have been describing. All honor to them; and all honor to men of different vocations who have likewise been fellow-helpers in the truth.

Who can compute the influence that Robert Browning has had on contemporaneous religion, on its conceptions, its aspirations and endeavors? He has imbued much of the best thought of the times with a philosophy bordering on the infinite, that has redeemed it from triviality and insipidity; and he has set our common things in a spiritual light so strong and clear that they have taken on a new and higher meaning to the soul. No one can read his poems studiously without something of the feeling that he is being led beyond the gross veil that obscures invisible

splendors into a universe far other and far nobler than that in which ordinary lives are lived. The teaching of the poet has tended to refine the age, and it has done this by rebuking the realism in literature which had well nigh become identical with the sensual, and by the consecration of genius and art to the melodious interpretation of the deeper and holier mysteries of being. Impossible for such a bard to sing, and not waken responsive echoes in every pulpit where culture has entered into sisterhood with faith; and impossible for his sublime strains to thrill the public mind, and congregations not demand something more than elementary principles and incontrovertible platitudes for their Sunday food.

Nor is Browning alone in this ministry. John Ruskin, likewise has shared in its toils and triumphs. The world knows more of the real significance of painting, of architecture, and even of nature because of his writings. How honestly he has dealt with the deform-

ities and deceptions of society; how faithfully he has talked to the laboring classes, and how admirably and fairly he has pleaded their cause. What a knack he has had of getting at the root of an evil, exposing it, rebuking it, and confounding it. When he declares that "the last and worst thing that can be said of a nation is that it has made its young girls sad and weary," he seems to have summed up the chief villainy of our civilization. And when he writes: "There is but one way in which man can ever help God — that is by letting God help him; and there is no way in which His name is more guiltily taken in vain, than by calling the abandonment of our own work, the performance of His" — what a flood of disturbing light he lets in on some very paltry notions of what is superexcellent in piety. This sturdy prophet of æsthetics, who always grounds the beautiful in the good and true, and who would invest the workshop as well as the palace with its attractions and graces,

has been a genuine benefactor of mankind, and as such has exalted justice and roused the conscience of the Church to the crying needs of the wretched. Indirectly, but nevertheless potently, he has influenced the religion of our times; and with him a host of others whom we venerate and honor. But while I sincerely and gladly acknowledge the effective endeavors of all these notable men, I cannot but place the figure of the great preacher in the centre of the group as the mightiest of all the spiritual forces that have been molding the century.

My reasons for assigning this preëminence to him have been given fully in the preceding pages of this volume, and need not be repeated. He who, when he was told that infidelity had no orphan asylums, exclaimed, "Then the God who answers by orphanages be my God," was unquestionably a man of large insight into the essential nature of religion, and of large outlook as to the duty of the

Church. His entire career, when it shall be studied by future historians, will, I am sure, come to be explained in some such way as I have tried to explain it. As years roll by and the magnitude of his work is better understood, and his magnificent personality stands out more clearly, it will be seen that his supreme significance lies in this: that he was the chief agent in renewing the strength of Puritanism and in bringing it into sympathetic touch with this wonderful nineteenth century.

Some such impression as this has already found expression in the public journals of Great Britain. While it has not been specifically formulated, nevertheless many of the tributes borne to his worth seem to admit all that I have claimed on his behalf. One such tribute I quote from the *London Times*, whose words are supposed usually to imply more than they actually mean. Referring to Mr. Spurgeon, the paper says editorially: "His apostleship lives on in the quickened hearts

and heightened lives of his innumerable hearers, and his inspiration is acknowledged of all men. . . . All good and devout men among his countrymen, without distinction of faith or sect will stand in spirit round his open grave. . . . In the religious leader who has gone to his rest the English speaking world has lost a man of great power, of shrewd common sense, of remarkable influence; a man who could answer far better than the majority of men that searching question of Carlyle: 'Man, what is thy work?'"

Another voice bearing similar testimony may well be heard, especially as it is that of the eloquent Unitarian of Blackpool, England, Rev. J. Farnsworth. Preaching from 2 Sam. i:19, he said: "England could better afford to lose the late Prince than Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Intellectually, speculative differences were sunk under the weight of this man's spiritual influence, and as they conceived of the thousands who called him their

spiritual father, of the thousands who had been won from sin to righteousness, when they remembered that his love for man's eternal condition bore him on always as man's servant, sending his mighty emanations the wide world o'er, they respectfully bowed their heads and said: Though they could not agree with him doctrinally, yet the world was poorer to-day." This is high praise; and it is itself the best evidence, that an extraordinary mission, such as I have all too poorly portrayed has been successfully accomplished. Herein may the Church find comfort in her bereavement; and it should inspire her while she mourns, triumphantly to sing,

"Thou hast fought through the evil still holding the right.
Thou hast finished the task that was grandest—
Toiled on through the darkness and entered the light,
And now in the glory thou standest.
Though tears stained the way where in pain thou hast trod,
'Twas in parallel lines with the purpose of God."

XV.

JANUARY 31st, 1892, will long be memorable in the calender of Christendom. On that night, between eleven and twelve o'clock, the triumphant spirit of the Puritan Preacher sought the light of an eternal morning. The hush of the solemn hour that just precedes the day rested on the scene, stars gleamed as camp-fires in the sky, and wintry breezes strayed through shivering vineyards and olive-trees, and trembling flowers wrapped their rich-dyed leaves as garments round them. And then, when all was still, save from scarcely audible flutter of the wing of some benighted bird, or the melancholy murmur of the sapphire sea, a deep sigh was heard in a quiet chamber, an

almost imperceptible movement of a prostrate form, a stifled sob from anguished heart of faithful watcher, and then — death, placid, majestic, holy death.

"*Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!*"

Yes, but like other and less glorious victories, this one leaves behind tears and wounds and grief and consternation. The stream of sorrow that broke loose in the little room where lay in the dignity of death the mighty dead, like the waters of the Rhine springing up in the solitudes of the Grisons, hath flowed onward, broadening and deepening like that noble river, and hath reached at last the proportions of an ocean. Lamentations are everywhere. Wherever Christianity has extended its beneficent sway there is mourning to-day; and multitudes who have heretofore scoffed at religion silently and tearfully lay a wreath at the feet of its lifeless defender. How loving and impressive has been the homage of humanity to its departed

friend and teacher. At all points honor and respect. The little sunny and laughing town of Mentone assumed an unwonted and sincerely serious air; and as the sombre funeral cortége bore from its gates the precious burden destined for "God's acre" in England's fields, the flags half-masted and the subdued manner of the people showed both veneration and affection. The arrival of the remains on English soil was marked by tokens of profound respect and of heart-felt sorrow. Fifty thousand people view the face of the dead as the body lies in state, where often the living man had moved the multitudes. Editorials, addresses, letters, telegrams, sermons, by their spirit gave evidence of appreciation and regret; appreciation of a wonderful ministry now ended, and regret that it should have been brought thus prematurely to a close. Journals, that heretofore have evinced little if any interest in evangelical religion or its teachers, have in this instance waxed warm with generous eulogy; and

clergymen of the Church of England, like Canon Farrar and Canon Fleming, though of a very different communion, have not stinted their glowing praises. It may be said without exaggeration, that all classes in Great Britain, from royalty down, have testified by their condolence and by the sentiments they have expressed, to the national character of the loss they uniformly deplore. England mourns one of her noblest sons, and one who was a truer defender of her liberties and her greatness than her Nelsons, Wellingtons and Havelocks. And henceforth the quiet grave in the cemetery at Norwood will draw to it many pilgrims from all lands, whose hushed manner and tear-dimmed eyes shall perpetuate the tribute only commenced to be paid by recent funeral solemnities.

It is reported that the last words from the Scriptures repeated by Mr. Spurgeon were those familiar to us all, addressed by Paul to Timothy:

"*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*"

Fittingly they were inscribed on his coffin of olive wood; the wood itself symbolic of the blessed peace that had come to the sleeping Standard-Bearer. The language of the great Apostle to the Gentiles happily serves both as a chronicle and epitaph; a chronicle, for it is an epitome of the departed Puritan's career; an epitaph, as it embodies in brief the judgment of mankind regarding his worth and work. Chrysostom, commenting on this memorable verse, thus writes of his perplexity in ascertaining its precise significance: "Often when I have taken the Apostle into my hands and have considered this passage, I have been at a loss to understand why Paul here speaks so loftily: I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT. But now by the grace of God I seem to have found it out. For what purpose, then, does he speak thus? He writes to console the despondency of his disciple; and he therefore bids him

be of good cheer, since he was going to his crown, having finished all his work and obtained a glorious end. Thou oughtest to rejoice, he says; not to grieve. And why? Because I have fought the good fight. Just as a son, who was sitting bewailing his orphan state, might be consoled by his father saying to him, Weep not, my son. We have lived a good life; we have reached old age; and now we are leaving thee. Our life has been free from reproach; we are departing with glory; and thou mayest be held in honor for what we have done." I shall always associate this exposition with the euthanasia of our departed friend.

Doubtless in the painful pause preceding death, and when, perhaps the lips were mute, the varied scenes of his marvellous ministry passed before him and he saw anew the upturned faces of the multiplied thousands to whom he had preached, and recalled his own struggles with personal infirmities and with temptations that appealed to foolish vanity.

But as he reviewed in awe and silence the eventful past, as the morning radiance of eternity began to flush the horizon of his soul, he gratefully realized that his conscience condemned him not. While he may not always have risen to the height of a great occasion, while he may at times have failed to satisfy himself with efforts he had made, while others may have excelled him in culture, brilliancy and eloquence, he had at least — and to this he had the testimony of his own honest heart — waged a manful conflict and had ever been true to the light within. And as he reflected on the perished years, and on all that they had been to him, and humbly too, on all that he had been to them, was it strange that he should think in the triumphant pæan of Paul, and that his fainting lips should echo the exultation? Faint and low though the sound was, and perhaps not altogether articulate, it indicated to the loving watchers that the steward of manifold mercies had rendered his

account to the Supreme Judge, and had not been found wanting. It was as though he had said, "You have no reason to blush for me; I leave you no name stained by cowardice or by disloyalty": yea, and it was as though he appealed to us all, if we would die as he died, to fulfill our calling in the spirit of faithfulness. As I meditate on what I cannot but regard as his farewell message to the world, and in particular to the Church, I take up this song from the harp of an English bard, and pray that it may inspire us to follow in the footsteps of him who feared not the face of clay, and who, having "taken a side", dauntlessly maintained it to the end.

"Take thy side! The world's whole story
Is the strife of man with man;
Strive thine utmost best; and glory
To be called a partisan.

"Take thy side, and having taken,
Play thy part, erect and brave;
Like the steadfast oak unshaken,
Tho' the tempest round thee rave.

"Act the good thy thought conceiveth
What tho' some should misconstrue?
To the spirit that achieveth,
Highest honor is to do.

"Leave to meaner minds the wooing
Of the multitude's applause;
Glory crowns the glorious doing
By irrevocable laws.

"Bear a dauntless heart; inherit
All that to this right doth cling;
For the resolute of spirit
Is alone both lord and king."

XVI.

ADDISON, in one of his delightful essays, describes an afternoon spent in Westminster Abbey. He wandered through the churchyard, the cloister and the church itself, and contemplated with curious eyes the tombstones and the inscriptions that abound in those several regions of the dead. What impressed him most was the fact that in the majority of instances the epitaph was so exceedingly meagre that hardly anything was recorded excepting the day of birth and the day of death. The brilliant editor of the *Spectator* could not but look on these memorials of existence as bitter satires on departed dignitaries; for they had left behind them no other record than that which is common to the humblest villager in a

country church-yard. How many are thus honored in stone and brass in Pantheon or Necropolis who have no claim to the attention and respect of mankind, and of whom it can only be said that they were, and are not. But outside of these stately shrines and umbrageous cemeteries, if men and women are remembered, it is because they have done that which has secured for themselves an imperishable place in human hearts. Indeed, these memorials, even the most magnificent, cannot secure to mediocrity or meanness an enviable immortality. No name is really cherished by the race because it has a tablet in the long drawn aisle of Westminster, or within the sacred enclosure of Sante Croce; but only as it is synonymous with some heroic sacrifice and noble deed wrought on behalf of the poor suffering world, or with some great inspiring thought that has moved humanity toward light and liberty. The Apostles needed no gilded tomb in venerable Basilicas to commemorate their greatness; nor Bunyan,

nor Luther, nor Wesley either; and so little depends on bronze or marble, that the multitudes who most revere these exalted leaders, know not where the hospitable earth has given their dust a home and shelter. Our brother, likewise, needs no other Westminster than the lives of those for whom he labored assiduously and ardently, and whose children's children shall rise up and call him blessed. And were the place of his sepulchre to perish from the memory of man, and were it no longer distinguishable from the mass of unnamed graves, nevertheless the fame of Charles Haddon Spurgeon would survive and continue a sacred treasure to be fondly cherished by posterity forever.

To weary and perplexed thinkers it will seem strange that a man like this should have been for nearly one-third of his entire public career encompassed by physical infirmities; and that being what he was his mission should have been brought prematurely to a close. Serious souls are frequently tormented by such

questionings. Why could not this mighty man have been spared yet many years? And why could not his last days on earth have been exempt from anxiety, tribulation and pain? Would it not have been better for vigor to have been preserved to him, that the mind, freed from suffering fellowship with the body, might have continued the work of his ministry unimpeded and unhindered to some marvellous climax of grace and glory?

Alas! for our foolishness, which we in our vanity count veritable sagaciousness. We know nothing at all. What appears mistake to us is probably Divinest wisdom; and what we cannot understand because of the apparent darkness, may turn out to be a morning of blessing "when the mists shall have rolled away". Let us remember that humanity is not upon the throne of the universe. He reigns who is infallible in wisdom as He is unfailing in love. He reigns, and let our hearts be still. And though we cannot compass shore-

less mysteries, at least, as thousands draped in deepest mourning pay their homage to the worth and grandeur of the illustrious dead, we may reverently and softly whisper to our troubled minds, "Be still and know that He is God."

"I think we are too ready with complaint
In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope
Indeed beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon grey blank of sky, we might grow faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls. But since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop
For a few days consumed in loss and taint?
O pusillanimous heart! be comforted,
And, like a cheerful traveler, take the road,
Singing beside the hedge. What if the bread
Be bitter in thine inn, and thou unshod
To meet the flints? — At least it may be said,
'Because the way is *short*, I thank thee, God "

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Lorimer, George Claude, 1838-1904.
Charles Haddon Spurgeon : the puritan preacher in the nineteenth cnetury : a monograph / by George C. Lorimer. -- Boston : Earle, 1892.
230p. : plate, port. ; 20cm.

1. Spurgeon, Charles Haddon, 1834-1892.

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